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[Haywood, Eliza]

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BY EXPLORABILIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

TO THE PUBLICK.

I Have obſerved that when a new book begins to make a noiſe in the world, every one is deſirous of becoming acquainted with the author; and this impatience increaſes, the more he endeavours to conceal himſelf. I expect to hear an hundred different names inſcribed to the Inviſible, ſome of which I ſhould, perhaps, be proud of, others as much aſhamed to own. Some will doubtleſs take me for a philoſoper, others for a fool; with ſome I ſhall paſs for a man of pleaſure, with others for a ſtoick; ſome will look upon me as a courtier, others as a patriot: but whether I am any one of theſe, or whether I am even a man or a woman, they will find it, after all their conjectures, as difficult to diſcover as the longitude.

I think it therefore a duty incumbent on my good-nature to put an early ſtop to ſuch fruitleſs inquiſitions; and alſo at the ſame time to ſatisfy, in ſome meaſure, the curioſity of the publick, by giving an account of the means by which I attained the gift of inviſibility I poſſeſs.

Know then, gentle reader, that in the former part of my life it was my good fortune to do a ſignal ſervice to a certain venerable perſon ſince dead: he was deſcended from the ancient Magi of the Chaldeans, inherited their wiſdom, and was well verſed in all the myſtick ſecrets of their art. Beſides his gratitude for the good offices I had done him, he ſeemed to have found ſomething in my humour and manner of behaviour that extremely pleaſed him; he would often have me with him, and entertained me with diſcourſes on things of which otherwiſe I ſhould have had no idea.

But it was not long that I enjoyed this benefit. He ſent for me one day, to let me know he was much indiſpoſed, and deſired I would come immediately to him: I went, and found him, not as I expected, in bed, but ſitting in an eaſy chair. After the firſt ſalutations were over, and I had placed myſelf pretty near him—'My good friend,' ſaid he, taking hold of my hand, 'I feel that I 'muſt ſhortly quit this buſy world; the 'ſilver cord is looſened, the golden bowl 'is broken, every thing within me haſ-'tens to a ſpeedy diſſolution; and I was 'willing to ſee you once more before I 'ſet out on my journey to that land of 'ſhades; as Hamlet truly ſays—

"That undiſcover'd country, from whoſe
"bourn
"No traveller returns."

'As the remembrance of you,' continued he, 'will certainly accompany 'me beyond the grave, I would wiſh, 'methinks, to hold ſome place in your

'while you remain on earth, to the end 'that I may not be quite a ſtranger to 'you when we meet in eternity. I have 'no land, nor tenements, nor gold, nor 'ſilver, to bequeath, yet am not deſtitute 'of ſomething which may be equally 'worthy your acceptance.'

Then, after a little pauſe—'Take 'this,' added he, giving me a key; 'it 'will admit you into a cloſet which no 'one but myſelf has ever entered. I call 'it my cabinet of curioſities, and I be-'lieve you will find ſuch things there as 'will deſerve that name: chuſe from 'among them any one that moſt ſuits 'your fancy, and accept it as a token 'of my love.'

He ſaid no more, but rung his bell for a ſervant, who, by his orders, conducted me by a narrow winding ſtair-caſe to the top of the houſe, and left me at a little door, which I opened with the key that had been given me, and found myſelf in a ſmall ſquare room, built after the manner of a turret. All the furniture was an old wicker chair, with a piece of blanket thrown careleſsly over it, I ſuppoſe to defend the ſage from the air when he ſat there to ſtudy: near it was placed a table, not leſs antiquated, with two globes, a ſtandiſh with ſome paper, and ſeveral books in manuſcript, but wrote in characters too unintelligible for me to comprehend any part of what they contained. Juſt in the middle of the cieling hung a pretty large chryſtal ball, filled with a ſhining yellowiſh powder, and this inſcription patted on it—

THE ILLUSIVE POWDER.

A ſmall quantity of this powder, blown through the quill of a porcupine when the Moon is in Aries, raiſes ſplendid viſions in the people's eyes; and, if applied when the ſame planet is in Cancer, ſpreads univerſal terror and diſmay.

I eaſily perceived that this was one of the curioſities my friend had mentioned, and a great one indeed it was; but, as I had neither intereſt nor inclination to impoſe upon my fellow-creatures, I judged it fitter for the poſſeſſion of ſome one or other of the mighty rulers of the earth.

I then turned towards the walls, which were all hung round with teleſcopes, horoſcopes, microſcopes, taliſmans, multipliers, magnifiers of all degrees and ſizes, loadſtones cut in various forms, and great numbers of mathematical inſtruments; but theſe, as I was altogether ignorant of their uſes, I paſſed ſlightly over, till I came to a hand-bell, which having the appearance of no other than ſuch as I had ordinarily ſeen at a lady's tea-table, I ſhould have taken no notice of, but for a label prefixed to it, on which I found theſe words—

THE SYMPATHETICK BELL,

The leaſt tinkle of which not only ſets all the bells of the whole country, be it of ever ſo large extent, in motion, without the help of men to pluck the ropes, but alſo makes them play whatever changes the party is pleaſed to nominate.

Though I thought art could produce no greater wonder than this bell, yet I felt no ſtrong deſire of becoming maſter of it; but proceeded to examine what farther rarities this extraordinary cabinet would preſent. The next I took notice of was a phial, not much unlike thoſe which are commonly ſold in the ſhops with French Hungary-water: it had this inſcription—

SALTS OF MEDITATION,

Which, held cloſe to the noſtrils for the ſpace of three ſeconds and a half, corrects all vague and wandering thoughts, fixes the mind, and enables it to ponder juſtly on any ſubject that requires deliberation.

This beneficial ſecret I alſo rejected, through a mere point of conſcience, as thinking it would be a much better ſervice to mankind if in the poſſeſſion of the divines, lawyers, politicians, or phyſicians; eſpecially the two laſt mentioned, as it might prevent the one from engaging in any enterprize they have not abilities or courage to go through with; and the other from falling into thoſe groſs miſtakes they are frequently guilty of in relation to the caſe of the diſeaſed.

The next, and indeed the firſt thing that raiſed in me any covetous emotions, was the apparatus of a belt, but ſeemed no more than a collection of atoms gathered together in that form, and playing in the ſun-beams. I could not perſuade myſelf it was a real ſubſtance, till I took

I took it down, and then found it so light, that if I shut my eyes I knew not that I had any thing in my hand. The label annexed to it had these words—

THE BELT OF INVISIBILITY,

Which, fastened round the body, next the skin, no sooner becomes warm, than it renders the party invisible to all human eyes.

A little farther, on the same side of the wall, was placed a tablet, or pocket-book; which, on examining, I found was composed of a clear glassy substance, firm, yet thin as the bubbles which we sometimes see rise on the surface of the waters: it was malleable, and doubled in many foldings, so that, when shut, it seemed very small; but, when extended, was more long and broad than any sheet I ever saw of imperial paper. It's uses were decyphered in the following inscription—

THE WONDERFUL TABLET,

Which, in whatever place it is spread open, receives the impression of every word that is spoken, in as distinct a manner as if engraved; and can no way be expunged but by the breath of a virgin, of so pure an innocence as not to have even thought on the difference of sexes. After such a one, if such a one is to be found, has blown pretty hard upon it for the space of seven seconds and three quarters, she must wipe it gently with the first down under the left wing of an unfledged swan, plucked when the Moon is in three degrees of Virgo: this done, the Tablet will be entirely free from all former memorandums, and fit to take a new impression.

Note, That the virgin must exceed twelve years of age.

I was very much divided between these two: the Belt of Invisibility put a thousand rambles into my head, which promised discoveries highly flattering to the inquisitiveness of my humour; but then the Tablet, recording every thing I should hear spoken, which I confess my memory is too defective to retain, filled me with the most ardent desire of becoming master of so inestimable a treasure. In fine, I wanted both; so encroaching is the temper of mankind, that the grant of one favour generally paves the way for soliciting a second.

While I was in this dilemma, a stratagem occurred, which I hesitated not to put in practice, and found it answer to my wishes. I took both the Belt and Tablet in my hand; and having carefully locked the door of the cabinet, returned to the adept: he saw the Belt, which being long, hung over my wrist; but not perceiving I had the Tablet—'The choice you have made,' said he with a smile, 'confirms the truth of 'what I always believed, that curiosity 'is the most prevailing passion of the 'human mind.'

'However just that position may be,' replied I, 'that propensity is not strong 'enough in me, to make me able to de-'cide between the wonderful Tablet, 'and the no less wonderful Belt: they 'appear to me of such equal estimation, 'that whenever I would fix on the one, 'the benefits of the other rise up in op-'position to my choice; and I know not 'which of the two I should receive with 'most pleasure, or leave with the least 'regret. I have therefore brought both 'down to you, and intreat you will de-'termine for me.'

I soon perceived he understood my meaning perfectly well; for, after a little pause—'When I made you the offer,' said he, 'of whatever you liked best 'among my collection of curiosities, I 'intended not that your acceptance of 'one thing should render you unhappy 'through the want of another: take, 'then, I beseech you, both the Belt and 'the Tablet; you shall leave neither of 'them behind you; nor do I wonder 'you should desire to unite them; they 'are, in a manner, concomitant; and 'the satisfaction that either of them 'would be able to procure, would be 'incompleat without the assistance of the 'other.'

Thus was I put in possession of a treasure, which I thought the more valuable, as I was pretty certain no other person, in this kingdom at least, enjoyed the like. After making proper acknowledgments to the obliging donor, I took my leave, and returned home with a heart overflowing with delight.

I was not long before I made trial of my Belt, and found the effects as the label had described. I also opened my Tablet, spoke, and saw my words immediately

mediately imprinted on it. I then procured ſome ſwans-down, according to direction, and entreated ſeveral young ladies to breathe upon it, one after another: but though I dare anſwer for their virtue, the favour they did me was in vain; the impreſſion remained ſtill indelible.

Indeed, when I began to conſider maturely on the conditions preſcribed in the label of the Tablet, I was ſenſible that it was not enough for a virgin to be perfectly innocent; ſhe muſt alſo be equally ignorant, to be qualified for the performance of the taſk required: and not to have once thought on the difference of ſexes, ſeemed a thing ſcarce poſſible, after ſix or ſeven years of age at moſt; and would have been as great a prodigy as either of thoſe which had been beſtowed upon me by the adept.

What would I not have given for ſuch a one as Dorinda in Shakeſpeare's Inchanted Iſland! but ſuch a hope being vain, I was extremely puzzled, and knew not what to do. At laſt, however, a lucky thought got me over the difficulty; it was this: I prevailed, for a ſmall ſum of money, with a very poor widow, who had ſeveral children, to let me have a girl of about three years old, to bring up and educate as I judged proper. I then committed my little purchaſe to the care of an elderly woman, whoſe diſcretion I had experienced. I communicated to her the whole of my deſign, and inſtructed her how to proceed in order to render it effectual.

The little creature was kept in an upper room, which had no window in it but a ſky-light in the roof of the houſe; ſo could be witneſs of nothing that paſſed below. Her diet was thin, and very ſparing. She was not permitted to ſleep above half the time generally allowed for repoſe; and ſo no living thing but the old woman, who lay with her, gave her food, and did all that was neceſſary about her.

I frequently viſited them in my inviſibility, and was highly pleaſed and diverted with the diligence of my good old woman. She not only obeyed my orders with the utmoſt punctuality, but did many things of her own accord, which, though very requiſite, I had not thought of. To prevent her young charge from falling into any of thoſe diſtempers which the want of exerciſe ſometimes occaſions, ſhe contrived to make a ſwing for her acroſs the room; taught her to play at battledore and ſhuttlecock; to toſs the ball, and catch it at the rebound; and ſuch like childiſh gambols, which both delighted her mind, and kept her limbs in a continual motion.

This conduct, and this regimen, conſtantly obſerved, maintained my virgin's purity inviolate; as I did not fail to make an eſſay in a few days after ſhe entered into her thirteenth year, and the ſucceſs of my endeavours made me not regret the pains I had been at for ſuch a length of time.

Now it runs in my head that ſome people will not credit one word of all this; for as there are many who believe too much, there are yet many more who will believe nothing at all but what their own ſhallow reaſon enables them to comprehend. Well, then, let them judge as they think fit; let them puzzle their wiſe noddles till they ache; I ſhall ſit ſnug in my inviſibility, while they loſe half the pleaſure, and, it may be, all the improvement, of my lucubrations.

But thoſe who reſolve to purſue me through the following pages with an ingenuous candour, I flatter myſelf will loſe nothing by the chace. They will find me in various places, though not in ſo many as perhaps they may expect. They would in vain ſeek me at court balls, city feaſts, the halls of juſtice, or meetings for elections; nor do I much haunt the opera or playhouſes. In fine, I avoid all crowds, all mixed aſſemblies, except the maſquerade and Venetian balls. I am a member of the eſtabliſhed church; but, as I am not aſhamed of appearing at divine worſhip, never put on my Inviſible Belt when I go there. I revere regal authority, but ſeldom viſit the cabinets of princes; becauſe they are generally ſo filled with a thick fog, that the chryſtalline texture of my Tablets could not receive what was ſaid there ſo as to be read diſtinctly: nor do I much care to venture myſelf among their miniſters of ſtate, or any of their under working tools; the floors of their rooms, in which their cabals are held, are compoſed of ſuch ſlippery materials, that the leaſt *faux pas* might endanger my inviſibility, if not my neck. I ſhould be more frequently with the military gentlemen,

tlemen, but that they are ſo apt to draw their ſwords without occaſion, that while they think they are fencing in the air, they might chance to cut my belt aſunder. And what a figure I ſhould make, when one half of me was diſcovered, and the other was concealed! I will not mention the conſequence ſuch a ſight might produce in ſome of them.

But it would be of little importance to the publick to be told where I am not, unleſs they alſo know where I am. Have patience, then, good people, and you ſhall be ſatisfied.

Sometimes I ſtep in at one or other of thoſe gaming-houſes which are above law, by being under the protection of the great; but I ſeldom ſtay long in any of them, as I can ſee nothing there but what I have ſeen an hundred times before in thoſe leſſer aſſemblies of the ſame kind that have been ſo juſtly put down by authority.

Sometimes I peep into the cloſet of an antiquarian, where I find matter enough to excite both my pity and contempt. What greater inſtance can we have of the depravity of human nature, than in a rich curmudgeon, who, while he grumbles to allow his family neceſſary food, chearfully unties his bags, and pours out fifty, or, it may be, an hundred guineas, for the purchaſe of a bit of old copper; only becauſe a fellow of more wit than honeſty tells him it was found under the ruins of an ancient wall, where it had been buried ever ſince the time of Julius Cæſar, or Severus?

Sometimes, too, I amuſe myſelf with turning over the collection of a virtuoſo; where I am always filled with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, at finding ſums ſufficient to endow an hoſpital laviſhed in the purchaſe of wings of butterflies, the ſhells of fiſhes, dried reptiles, the paw of ſome exotick animal, and ſuch like baubles, neither pleaſing in their proſpect nor uſeful in their natures.

Sometimes I make one at the levee of a rich heir, juſt arrived from his travels to the poſſeſſion of an overgrown eſtate; where I cannot help trembling for the future fate of the poor youth, on ſeeing him beſieged with a crowd of marriage-brokers, pleaſure-brokers, exchange-brokers, lawyers, gameſters, French taylors, Dreſden milliners, petitioning harlots, congratulating poets; in fine, with ſharpers, flatterers, and ſycophants, of every kind.

Sometimes I mingle in the route of a woman of quality; ſee who wins, who loſes, at play; and in what manner ladies are frequently obliged to pay their debts of honour.

When I have nothing better to employ my time, I loiter away ſome hours in St. James's Park, Kenſington Gardens; or at Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and Mary-le-bon; and am often witneſs of ſome ſcenes exciting preſent mirth and future reflection.

But my chief delight is in the drawing-room of ſome celebrated toaſts, whence I often ſteal into their bed-chambers.—But don't be frighted, ladies; I never carry my inſpections farther than the *ruelle*.

Theſe are ſome few particulars of the tour I have made. To give the whole detail would be too tedious. I ſhall therefore only ſay that, wherever I am found, I ſhall always be found a lover of morality; and no enemy to religion, or any of it's worthy profeſſors, of what ſect or denomination ſoever.

And now, reader, having let thee into the ſecret of my hiſtory, as far as it is convenient for me to reveal, I ſhall leave thee to enjoy the advantage of thoſe diſcoveries my inviſibility enabled me to make.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINS SOME PREMISES VERY NECESSARY TO BE OBSERVED BY EVERY READER; AND ALSO AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S FIRST INVISIBLE VISIT.

IT was in the beginning of that ſeaſon of the year which affords moſt food for an enquiring mind, that I had got all things in order to ſally forth on my inviſible progreſſions. The auguſt repreſentatives of the whole body of the people were juſt ready to aſſemble; the expounders of the Law were hurrying to Weſtminſter Hall, and thoſe of the Goſpel to pay their compliments at St. James's. The ſhips of war were moſtly moored; and their gallant commanders had quitted the rough, athletick toil, for the ſoft charms of eaſe and luxury. The land-heroes, who, having no employment

ployment for their ſwords, had paſſed their days in rural ſports, now hunted after a different ſort of game, at the theatres and maſquerades. Frequent conſultations were held at the toilets of the ladies, on ways and means to outſhine each other in the circle. Former amours were now revived, and even new ones every day commenced. Madam Intelligence, with her thouſand and ten thouſand emiſſaries, all loaded with reports, ſome true, ſome falſe, flew ſwiftly through each quarter of this great metropolis; and had every pore of every human body been an ear, they all might have been fully gratified.

Beſides the gratification of a darling paſſion, I had another, and much more juſtifiable reaſon, for the value I ſet upon the legacy of my departed friend; which is this: I have it in my power to pluck off the maſk of hypocriſy from the ſeeming ſaint; to expoſe vice and folly in all their various modes and attitudes; to ſtrip a bad action of all the ſpecious pretences made to conceal or palliate it, and ſhew it in it's native uglineſs. At the ſame time, I have alſo the means to reſcue injured innocence from the cruel attacks begun by envy and ſcandal, and propagated by prejudice and ill-nature. In fine, I am enabled, by this precious gift, to ſet both things and perſons in their proper colours; and not in ſuch as, either through malice or partial favour, they are frequently made to appear.

I ſhould be ſorry, however, if any thing I have ſaid ſhould give the reader occaſion to imagine I am going to preſent him with a book of ſcandal: no; the ſecrets of families, and characters of perſons, ſhall be always ſacred with me. I ſhall give no man the opportunity of indulging a malicious pleaſure of laughing at his neighbour's faults. My aim, in this work, is not to ridicule, but reform. I would touch the hearts, not call a bluſh upon the face. And, as few people have errors ſo peculiar to themſelves, as there are not many guilty of the like, if the offender keeps his own counſel, he may very well paſs undiſtinguiſhed among the crowd of others equally culpable.

Verramond is juſtly accounted one of the moſt accompliſhed gentlemen of the preſent age. The gracefulneſs of his perſon, the engaging manner of his converſation, his fine addreſs, and uncommon capacity, make his company deſired by all the young and gay part of the world; as his great learning, and perfect knowledge of men and things, render him the oracle of the more grave and ſerious. I had frequently the honour of meeting him at ſeveral places where I viſited, and found nothing in him which could in the leaſt contradict thoſe high ideas fame had given me of him.

It was therefore natural for me to take the advantage of my gift of inviſibility, in order to view this great perſon in his moſt retired moments; I mean, when he was alone, and diveſted of all thoſe modes and ceremonies which often diſguiſe the real man, and ſhew him to the publick far different from what he is.

Accordingly, the firſt viſit I made in my Belt was at his houſe. I ſlipped in as ſoon as I ſaw the door opened, went up ſtairs, and paſſed through ſeveral rooms, till I came to that where he was ſitting. I found him with a book in his hand, on which he ſeemed very intent. I doubted not but it was a treatiſe of philoſophy, or ſome other piece of learning or wit, ſuitable to the capacity of ſo great a genius: but how much was I ſurprized, when, looking over his ſhoulder, I perceived it was Hoyle's Method of Playing the Game of Whiſt! He appeared more than ordinarily taken up with one page, for he read it over three or four times; then ſtarted up from his chair, and throwing the book from him in a rage—'Curſe on this ſtuff!' cried he; 'it is good for nothing but to 'teach a man how to undo himſelf 'with more art.' After walking for ſome minutes backwards and forwards in the room with a diſordered motion, he flung himſelf into his chair, and fell into a profound reverie; in which I know not how long he might have continued, if he had not been rouzed from it by the approach of a perſon who I preſently found was his ſteward.

The buſineſs on which this man came into the room was no way pleaſing to Verramond; but becauſe I would avoid the troubleſome repetitions of 'ſaid he,' and 'replied he,' and 'reſumed the 'other,' and ſuch-like introductions to every ſpeech, I ſhall preſent all thoſe dialogues which are proper to be communicated to the publick, in the ſame manner as in the printed copies of theatrical performances.

Steward. My lord, the ſeveral tradeſ-

men

men whom your lordſhip ordered to come this morning are below, and wait your lordſhip's commands.

Verramond. I have no commands for them at all; ſo ſend them away.

Steward. Shall I bid them attend your lordſhip to-morrow?

Verramond. Aye, to-morrow ſix months, if you will; for I ſhall ſcarce have any buſineſs with them before.

Steward. My lord, I told them they ſhould all be paid off this morning. What excuſe can I make to them for ſuch a diſappointment?

Verramond. E'en what you will. If you can invent nothing better, you may tell them that you lyed when you made that promiſe in my name.

Steward. Your lordſhip knows it was by your own order I made that promiſe; and that you ſent me into the city yeſterday for money, which I doubted not but was to make good what I had told them. If your lordſhip pleaſes to conſider, it is now a long time ſince they brought in their bills, and they have had a great deal of patience.

Verramond. Rot their patience! Do you think to make a merit to me of their patience? Go, I ſay; ſend them away, and let me hear no more of them.

The tone in which Verramond uttered theſe words was ſo auſtere, that the honeſt domeſtick had not courage to reply, but left the room immediately; probably to receive no ſofter treatment below, from thoſe he was compelled to diſappoint, than he had juſt met with above, for attempting to intercede in their behalf.

Lord Macro was preſently after introduced. The late ſullenneſs of Verramond ſeemed now entirely diſſipated. Whatever was in his heart, his countenance wore only ſmiles; and he ran to receive him with open arms, and all the teſtimonies of the moſt perfect ſatisfaction: and yet, as I ſoon found by the diſcourſe they had together, this very Macro, the night before, had won of him at play fifteen hundred pounds, which was the ſum he had ſet apart for the payment of his creditors. Their converſation turning wholly upon gaming, a ſubject neither entertaining nor improving, I ſhall give my readers no more than a bare ſpecimen of it.

Lord Macro. My dear Verramond, I could not be eaſy till I ſaw you this morning: I thought you left the company ſomewhat abruptly laſt night, and was afraid your ill luck had given you ſome chagrin.

Verramond. Not in the leaſt, my dear Macro. I never think any thing loſt that a friend gains. But I remembered that I had ſome letters to write; otherwiſe ſhould have ſtaid and truſted Fortune with a brace or two of hundreds farther.

Lord Macro. As it is an honour to get the better of your lordſhip in any thing, ſo it will be no diſgrace to be overcome by a perſon of ſuch ſuperior abilities; therefore, I am ready to give you your revenge when you think fit.

Verramond. Nay, as for that, Macro, it muſt be confeſſed you know the game better than I.

Here followed a long ſucceſſion of mutual compliments on each other's ſkill in play; of which growing heartily tired, I was beginning to think of leaving the place; and ſhould have done ſo, if the appearance of the ſteward a ſecond time had not made me expect ſome change in the ſcene. His errand, and the ſucceſs it met with, will not, perhaps, appear ſo extraordinary to thoſe acquainted with the modiſh way of thinking, as it then did to me.

Steward. Farmer Hobſon is below, my lord. The poor man has rode hard all night, on purpoſe to reach town this morning, and lay his miſerable condition before your lordſhip.

Verramond. Piſh! what have I to do with his condition?

Steward. He ſays, my lord, that his crop proved ſo bad laſt year, that he had ſcarce wherewith to ſtock the ground; that Mr. Hardmeat, your lordſhip's ſteward in the country, is very ſenſible of his misfortunes; yet, though there are but five quarters due, threatens to turn him out of the farm next week. He therefore humbly hopes your lordſhip will take compaſſion on him, as he has ſix ſmall children, and his wife now lying in of the ſeventh.

Verramond. What buſineſs have ſuch fellows to get children? Does he expect my rent ſhall go for the maintenance of his brats?

Steward. He begs your lordſhip to

conſider that, for theſe eleven years he has rented the farm, he has always paid your lordſhip honeſtly; and does not doubt, through Providence, but to do ſo ſtill, if your lordſhip is pleaſed to have patience till next harveſt is over, and not ruin him at once.

Verramond. Let me hear no more of this ſtuff! I leave all to Mr. Haidmeat: he knows what he has to do; and I ſhall give myſelf no trouble about it.

The ſteward, with whoſe good-nature I was infinitely charmed, had his mouth open to urge ſomething farther in behalf of the diſtreſſed farmer, but was prevented by a ſervant that inſtant coming in, and preſenting a letter to Verramond; who then bid him go down, and tell the unhappy ſupplicant he might return home, for there was no anſwer to be given to his complaint.

Verramond would not open the letter he had juſt received till he knew who ſent it; but, on his footman's informing him it came from Mr. Gamble, he haſtily broke the ſeal, and found the contents as follows—

'MY EVER-HONOURED LORD,

'I Happen'd to be engaged laſt night 'at a houſe where the conſtable, 'with his poſſe, made a forcible en- 'trance, demoliſhed our tables, put 'moſt of the company to flight, and 'ſeized the reſt. I was unluckily one 'of the laſt claſs; and committed to 'durance vile, as Hudibras ſays, as 'your lordſhip will perceive by the 'date hereof.

'A perſon here has undertaken, for a 'fee of five guineas, to procure my im- 'mediate diſcharge; and I do not 'doubt, by the method he propoſes, but 'he is able to do it. I am not, how- 'ever, at preſent, maſter of as many 'ſhillings: nor can any way raiſe the 'money he demands; having been 'obliged, the day before this accident 'befel me, to leave my watch, linen, 'and beſt apparel, at Mr. Grub's, in 'truſt for a ſmall ſum required of me 'by the pariſh-officers, on account of a 'baſtard child, which a wench of the 'town has done me the honour to ſwear 'I am the father of.

'All my hopes, therefore, of get- 'ting out of limbo, are in your lord- 'ſhip's generoſity; which if you vouch- 'ſafe to grant me this one more proof 'of, I ſhall, if poſſible, be more than 'ever, with the moſt profound duty, 'dear patron, your devoted vaſſal,

'RICHARD GAMBLE.

'BRIDEWELL.

'P. S. I had forgot to acquaint 'your lordſhip, that I ſhall have need 'of more than the above-mentioned 'ſum, for diſcharging the fees of this 'curſed hole; without the payment 'of which I cannot be releaſed.'

Verramond heſitated not a moment to comply with this requeſt, nor even whether he ſhould exceed what was deſired of him: he drew out his purſe, put ten guineas into the footman's hands, and ordered him to run directly to Bridewell. 'Carry that money to 'Mr. Gamble, with his compliments; 'and let him know he ſhould be glad 'to ſee him, as ſoon as he has recovered 'his liberty.'

Who will ſay now that Verramond is not liberal? But, alas! how ill-placed an act of benevolence was this? Was it not rather caprice than true charity, which induced him to beſtow this money to ſave a common ſhaper from the puniſhment he juſtly merited; yet, at the ſame time, refuſe to an honeſt, induſtrious tenant, a ſmall reſpite of payment, though to preſerve him and his poor family from deſtruction? But Gamble was a neceſſary perſon at a gaming-table; he was of importance to his pleaſure that way: and the farmer being only regarded for the rent he paid, when deficient in that, muſt be thrown out like a piece of uſeleſs lumber, and his place occupied by ſome one who promiſed to be of greater utility.

Yet do I not think ſuch a conduct is always to be aſcribed to the fault of nature. Verramond has certainly the ſeeds of virtue and honour in his ſoul; but they are ſuffocated and choaked up by his immoderate love of play. Strange is it, that a man, capable of thinking ſo juſtly, will not be at the pains of thinking at all, but ſuffer himſelf to be ſwayed, by a darling propenſity, to actions which, if he once reflected upon, he would be ſo far from perpetrating, that he would deſpiſe the very temptation of being guilty of!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH SOME PASSAGES WHICH CANNOT FAIL OF ENTERTAINING THOSE NOT INTERESTED IN THEM, AND MAY BE OF SERVICE TO THOSE WHO ARE.

AMONG the numerous troops of British toasts, there are few who shine with more distinguished lustre, in all publick places, than the beautiful Marcella. Besides an exact symmetry of features, a most delicate complexion, and a fine-turned shape, there is something peculiarly enchanting in her air and mien. I never see her, without being reminded of the celebrated description Milton gives of Eve in her state of innocence—

'Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her
'eye,
'In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.'

She was married very young to Celadon; and though neither of their hearts had been consulted in the match, yet they had the reputation of living well together. They behaved to each other with the greatest complaisance in publick; and if any cause of discontent ever happened between them, both had the discretion to keep it extremely private.

I could not, therefore, expect to make any extraordinary discoveries in this family. The door, however, happening to be open one day as I passed by, I stepped in without any previous design; and, now I did so, was rather excited by curiosity of seeing some fine pictures, which I had been told were in the house, than of prying into the behaviour of the owners.

But it frequently falls out, that what we least seek we most easily find; and those things we imagine farthest from us, are in effect the nearest. In passing through the several rooms in this house, I saw Marcella writing in her closet; and never was I so much amazed as now, to find so fair a form harbour a mind capable of dictating these lines—

'TO FILLAMOUR.

'DEAREST OF YOUR SEX,

'THANKS to the powers of love
'and liberty, that hated bar to
'all my happiness is removed for a
'short time! Celadon is gone upon a
'party of pleasure, and this night is
'entirely my own. If, therefore, no
'more agreeable engagement detains
'you, come here between the hours of
'twelve and one. I shall take care to
'send all the family to bed, except the
'faithful Rachel; who shall attend to
'admit you, on your giving a gentle
'rap against the shutter of the parlour-
'window next the door. Let me know
'by the bearer whether I may expect
'you; though it is a blessing I scarce
'doubt of, if any of that affection be
'sincere, as you have often vowed to
'the believing and passionate

'MARCELLA.'

Having sealed this billet, she called her chambermaid, and ordered her to send it, as directed, by a trusty porter; then threw herself upon a couch, took the novel of Sylvia and Philander, read a little in it, sighed, and seemed all dissolved in the most tender languishment; when her emissary returned, and brought this answer to her summons—

'TO THE CHARMING MARCELLA.

'DEAR ANGEL,

'I Am at present surrounded with a
'great deal of company, and have
'no opportunity to thank as I would
'the kindness of yours. I can only
'say, that nothing shall keep me from
'flying to my adorable Marcella at the
'appointed hour: till then, adieu. Be
'assured that I am always, with the
'utmost ardency, your devoted vassal,

'FILLAMOUR.'

The fair libertine now expressed the highest satisfaction, and immediately fell into discourse with her confidante, Rachel, concerning the manner in which this nocturnal guest should be concealed, and how neither his entrance nor his exit be discovered, or even suspected, by any of the family.

I had no curiosity to know any thing farther of this affair, so took the first opportunity of leaving the house; extremely troubled in my mind that a woman, whose beauty had so much attracted my respect, should prove herself so unworthy of it by her conduct.

'With what boldneſs,' ſaid I within myſelf, 'does the lovely wanton run 'headlong to her ruin; fearleſs of 'guilt, and of the puniſhment which, 'one time or other, muſt be the un-'failing conſequence!

"As if that faultleſs form could act no "crime,
"But Heaven, on looking on it, muſt for-"give!"

I went home, and got my Tablets cleared from the impure contents of the above-recited epiſtles. I wiſhed, indeed, to think no more of this tranſaction; and, to ſecond my endeavours that way, towards evening ſallied out again, equipped in my Inviſible Belt, like a true knight-errant, in ſearch of ſuch adventures as chance ſhould preſent me with.

I went to the houſe of an elderly lady, with whom I formerly had been acquainted. She was at that time looked upon as a pattern of piety and prudence: fathers, huſbands, brothers, all who had any concern for the virtue and reputation of the female part of their family, recommended her example for their imitation; but, at laſt, after a long ſeries of the moſt laudable and becoming actions, ſhe at once degenerated into the very reverſe of what ſhe had been; fell into all the faſhionable follies of the times, at an age when others are beginning to grow weary of them, and commenced a coquette at fifty-five.

I had been told ſuch things, in relation to her conduct, as ſeemed to me too unaccountable to be believed; and was extremely ſorry to find, in the viſit I now made her, all thoſe reports confirmed by the teſtimony of my own ſenſes.

This lady, whom I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Lamia, ſets an high value upon herſelf for her great ſkill at picquet. She challenged Grizelda, another antiquated belle, who alſo pretends to be an adept in that ſcience, to play with her for an hundred guineas the firſt four games in ſix. The other loved money; and, not doubting ſhe ſhould come off conqueror, readily embraced the propoſal; and the night agreed upon between them for the deciſion of this event, happened to be that in which I went.

Grizelda came to the door juſt as I did; ſo I ſlipped in behind, and followed her up ſtairs; where ſhe was received by Lamia with the greateſt politeneſs and ſhew of affection. The card-table was called for, and the ladies ſat oppoſite to each other. I placed myſelf at the end of the table, that, being between them, I might have the better opportunity of obſerving what both did. They were now very ſerious, and attentive to the buſineſs they were upon: played, or rather cheated, each other with great caution; for I ſoon perceived that it was in this latter part of the art of gaming that the excellence of either chiefly conſiſted.

For a time, each was ſo taken up with her own *petites fourberies*, as not to have leiſure to obſerve thoſe practiſed by her adverſary. At laſt, however, Lamia having re-taken in a card ſhe had laid out, Grizelda perceived it, and accuſed her of the change. Rage and diſdain, on finding herſelf detected, made the cheeks of the other glow with a deeper ſcarlet than the carmine had given them; and her eyes, even in deſpight of age, ſparkle with fires which love and youth had never power to fill them with. The other was no leſs enflamed.—But their reſentment will beſt be ſhewn in the expreſſions made uſe of by themſelves.

Lamia. I am ſurprized you can ſuſpect me guilty of ſo mean a thing as cheating at cards. Sure you cannot think I value the trifle we are playing for! What is an hundred guineas to me? I regard an hundred no more than a pinch of ſnuff.

Grizelda. Madam, I value an hundred guineas as little as yourſelf; but I hate to be impoſed upon.

Lamia. What do you mean, Madam? Do you ſay I have impoſed upon you?

Grizelda. I ſay you would have done it, Madam, if my eyes had not been quicker than your hands.

Lamia. Madam, I ſcorn your words! and if you were not in my houſe, ſhould tell you that you lyed.

Grizelda. And if it were not in reſpect to your age, Madam, I ſhould tell you that you were a baſe woman, and had invited me hither only to cheat me of my money.

Lamia. My age!—good lack, my age!—I leave the world to judge which of us two looks the oldeſt. I beg, Madam, you will not deceive yourſelf. It is not your long falſe locks, hanging dangling on each ſide your face, that hide the wrinkles of it.

Grizelda.

R. Smirke del. Thelott. sculp.

Plate II.

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Grizelda. I wear no plumpers, Madam! Do you not remember, when one of yours dropped out of your mouth at Lady Betty's drawing-room, how all the company were frighted at you, and cried out you had loſt half your face?

I ſtarted on hearing this reproach of Grizelda, being, at that time, utterly unacquainted with the meaning of it; but, as it is highly probable that a great many of my readers may be as ignorant in this point as myſelf then was, I ſhall explain it, by giving a direction of the uſe and preparation of plumpers, as I have ſince received it from the waiting-maid of a woman of condition.

A SURE WAY TO HELP LANK CHEEKS.

TAKE a piece of the fineſt, cleaneſt ſponge you can get. Cut out of it two ſmall bolſters, and place them between your cheeks and teeth, if you have any; if not, the gums will ſerve to keep them up. On taking them out of your mouth, going to bed, throw them into a tea-cup of roſe or orange-flower water, and let them ſoak all night: this will not only cleanſe them from whatever impurites they may have happened to have received, but will alſo give a delectable flavour to the breath.—*Probatum eſt.*

Theſe ladies purſued their mutual altercations for a conſiderable time, in a faſhion which the intelligent reader may eaſily conceive by the ſample I have given. I ſhall therefore only ſay that, after having charged each other with all the vices and foibles that either of them could think of, they at laſt quarrelled themſelves into a reconciliation, begged each other's pardon, and went to play a ſecond time: then fell out again; and provocations on both ſides being renewed, and reproaches ſtill growing more piquant, Lamia tore the cards, and threw them into the fire. Grizelda called for her chair, and left the houſe in a great fury. I gladly followed her out, being heartily ſick of what I had ſeen between theſe fair, or rather unfair antagoniſts; but had no opportunity of getting away before, as the door had never once been opened.

It was now near two hours paſt midnight; and I found more ſatisfaction in the thoughts of going to my repoſe, than in thoſe diſcoveries my inviſibility had entertained me with. I was making all the ſpeed I could to my apartment for that purpoſe, but fate decreed it otherwiſe, and had contrived an accident which renewed all my former curioſity. In my way home I paſſed through the ſtreet where Marcella lived; and the ſight of her houſe bringing freſh into my mind what the morning had preſented, I could not keep myſelf from ſtopping ſhort, to make reflections on the conduct of that fair fallen angel. 'She is doubtleſs by this time in the arms of her beloved Fillamour,' ſaid I to myſelf; 'and, while revelling in the pleaſures of a looſe inclination, forfeits all ſenſe of honour, duty, fame, and even what is owing to the merit of thoſe charms nature has endowed her with; and oh! ſtrange paradox of a vicious flame! renders herſelf cheap and contemptible in the eyes of the very man whoſe eſteem ſhe moſt wiſhes to preſerve!'

How long I ſhould have remained in this reverie I know not, but I was rouzed from it by the ſudden appearance of Celadon, who, with a light carried before him, came haſtily down the ſtreet, and knocked at his own door. To ſee him return at a time when I knew he was ſo little expected, made me not doubt but that he had received ſome information of the injury done him, and came in order to detect and revenge himſelf on the guilty pair. I trembled for poor Marcella; but what grounds I had to do ſo, as well as the event of this night's tranſaction, muſt be left to the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

CONCLUDES AN ADVENTURE OF A VERY SINGULAR NATURE IN IT'S CONSEQUENCES.

THE anxiety I was under to know what would become of poor Marcella, immediately determined me to follow her huſband into the houſe. A man-ſervant not having obeyed his lady's commands in going to bed, having ſomething or other wherewith to employ himſelf in his own room, on hearing ſomebody at the door, looked through the window, and perceiving it was his maſter, flew down ſtairs, and gave him entrance on the firſt knock.

Rachel,

Rachel, who had been poſted centinel in a back-parlour, in order to watch the break of day, and conduct Fillamour out of the houſe before any of the family were ſtirring, now came running out on hearing the ſtreet-door opened; but, ſcarce could an apparition have ſpread a greater terror through her whole frame than did the ſight of Celadon at this juncture.

Rachel. Lord, Sir, who could have thought your honour would have come home to-night?

Celadon. I did not deſign it, indeed; but, is it ſo ſtrange a thing that a man ſhould change his mind?

In ſpeaking this he was paſſing on, but ſhe threw herſelf between him and the foot of the ſtairs, and catching faſt hold of the ſleeve of his coat, prevented him from going up, with theſe words:

Rachel. Oh, dear Sir! I beg you will not diſturb my lady; ſhe is gone to bed very much diſcompoſed: pray be ſo good as to ſtep into the parlour; there is a good fire, and I will go and ſee if ſhe is awake, and tell her you are here.

Celadon. My wife ill! What is the matter with her?

Rachel. I do not know, Sir, but ſhe was ſeized with a ſort of a—— I can't tell the name of it, indeed not I; but I believe it was ſomething like a fit; and ſo, Sir, ſhe went to bed; but I will go and let her know you are come.

Celadon. No, no, ſhe may be aſleep, and it would be a pity to wake her; therefore I'll take your advice, Mrs. Rachel, and ſit a little in the parlour.—Tom, do you go to bed, I ſhall not want any thing to-night.

The fellow did as he was commanded; and I could eaſily perceive, by Rachel's countenance, that ſhe was upon the wing to be gone too, impatient, I ſuppoſe, to apprize Marcella of what had happened, and aſſiſt her in contriving ſome means for concealing her gallant: but whatever her thoughts were, Celadon had that moment got ſomething in his head which effectually prevented any ſchemes ſhe might otherwiſe have laid for ſecuring the honour of her lady. Tom was no ſooner gone than Celadon took hold of both her hands, and drew her gently into the parlour, with theſe words—

Celadon. Come, Mrs. Rachel, if I am ſo complaiſant to my wife's diſorder as to refrain going to bed to her, I think I may very well be allowed the pleaſure of your company, by way of conſolation.

Rachel. Oh, dear Sir! what pleaſure can you find in the company of ſuch a one as I?

Celadon. As much as I can wiſh. Come, ſit down; nay, you ſhall ſit by me; now we are alone, there is no occaſion for all this diſtance between us. I have a great deal to ſay to you; nothing, ſure, was ever ſo lucky as my coming home to-night! I like you, I love you, and have longed, almoſt ever ſince you came into the family, for an opportunity to tell you ſo.

Rachel. Lord, Sir, how ſtrangely you talk to one! I wiſh your honour would let me go up ſtairs, to ſee how my lady does.

Celadon. No, indeed, I ſhall not ſuffer you to run away, and leave me alone here; if my wife wants any thing ſhe will ring her bell. Come, none of this coyneſs; let me tell you, child, too much reſerve in private with a man who loves you, and has it in his power to make your fortune, is as unbecoming as too much familiarity would be in publick. You may depend upon it, whatever favours you beſtow on me ſhall be returned with others no leſs agreeable to yourſelf. I know very well how a perſon of my ſtation ought to behave towards one of your ſex in theſe caſes, and ſhall act accordingly.

Rachel made no reply to all this, but hung down her head, and looked extremely ſilly. Celadon, interpreting her ſilence as a half conſent to his deſires, began now to add kiſſes and embraces to his ſolicitations: the warmth with which he preſſed her, ſoon wrought the effect it was intended for; though I eaſily perceived the moſt prevailing argument he made uſe of was taking out his purſe, and pouring twenty guineas into her lap. The tranſport which ſparkled in the eyes of this mercenary creature, on beholding the glittering bait, put me immediately in mind of what Mr. Dryden makes Jupiter ſay in his play of Amphytrion—

'When I made
'This gold, I made a greater god than Jove,
'And gave my own omnipotence away.'

But it is little to be wondered at that a girl, ſuch as this Rachel, ſhould fall proſtrate before that reigning idol of the world

world, who has for it's votaries not only men of the greateſt parts and abilities, but alſo too many among thoſe who make the higheſt profeſſions of honour, probity, and virtue; nay, I am ſorry to ſay, of religion: daily experience, however, and a very ſmall obſervation of the corruption of the preſent age, evinces this melancholy truth.

So finding a ſcene was likely to enſue, which it was not agreeable to my inclination, or any way proper that I ſhould be witneſs of, I withdrew into an adjacent parlour, where ſolitude, darkneſs, and the profound ſilence of every thing about me, contributed to promote the moſt ſolemn meditations. I reflected on the extreme folly, as well as wickedneſs, of giving way to an inordinate gratification of the ſenſes, and the certain danger, and almoſt certain infamy, which attends the doing ſo. On this occaſion ſeveral paſſages and accidents relating to many of my acquaintance occurred freſh to my mind; and when I remembered how ſome, who had been endowed by Heaven and Fortune with every requiſite, excepting virtue, to compleat their happineſs, yet by the want of that alone had expoſed themſelves to a condition the moſt abject and contemptible to which a reaſonable being can poſſibly be reduced, I could not forbear crying out with the inimitable Cowley—

'All this world's noiſe appears to me
'But as a dull, ill-acted comedy.'

While I was thus ruminating, and wondering within myſelf what would be the conſequence of this night's tranſaction, I perceived through the crevices of the window-ſhutters, that the day began to break, and preſently after heard a certain ruſtling upon the ſtairs: it was occaſioned by Marcella and Fillamour, who, on finding Rachel did not come up as they expected, and the light was pretty far advancing, were creeping ſoftly down. The noiſe Marcella made in unfaſtening the chain that went acroſs the ſtreet-door, waked Celadon and Rachel, who it ſeems had both fallen aſleep: the former, on hearing the noiſe, was running out of the parlour, to ſee what was the matter; but Rachel prevented him, by ſaying, ſhe was ſure it was only one of the footmen, who went out more early than ordinary to the ſtable. This excuſe might have ſolved all, if Marcella herſelf had not unluckily been her own betrayer. That lady, incenſed beyond meaſure, puſhed open the door of the room where Rachel was ordered to attend, beginning to upbraid before ſhe ſaw her.

Marcella. So, minx, you have ſerved me finely; it is almoſt broad day. I have knocked the heel of my ſhoe almoſt off, for I would not ring for fear of alarming the family. I ſuppoſe you have been aſleep: this it is to place any dependance on ſervants.

Celadon, on hearing his wife's voice before ſhe entered, had ſtepped behind a ſcreen, either ſuſpecting ſomething of the truth, or becauſe he was unwilling to be ſurprized with Rachel at that hour; and Rachel, doubly confounded between her lady's reproaches and the knowledge who was witneſs of them, that ſhe was utterly unable to ſpeak one word for ſome time, but ſhook her head, winked, and pointed to the ſcreen, thinking, by thoſe ſignificant geſtures, to prevent Marcella from ſaying any thing farther; till finding ſhe was again opening her mouth, ſhe recovered herſelf enough to cry out—

Rachel. Lord, Madam, do not ſtand talking here; you will certainly get cold, and make yourſelf worſe; conſider you are half naked; pray go to bed again.

Marcella. What does the wench mean? but I ſuppoſe you have been at the ratifia bottle, and ſtupified yourſelf, according to cuſtom. Well, 'tis your own loſs; for I dare ſwear Fillamour would have given you no leſs a preſent than five guineas for your diligence, if you had come up as you ought to have done: 'tis now quite light in the ſtreet, and a thouſand to one but ſome of the neighbours may have ſeen him go out.

Celadon coming forward. So, Madam, I find you have been diverting yourſelf, and Fillamour is the man to whom I am obliged for giving you conſolation in my abſence.

That perſon muſt know very little of nature, who does not eaſily conceive what Marcella felt in ſo ſhocking a juncture; ſurprize, ſhame, and vexation for having thus fooliſhly expoſed her guilt, quite overwhelmed her heart; ſhe gave a great ſhriek, and ſunk, half-fainting, into a chair. Rachel ran to her aſſiſtance, and at the ſame time willing to

relieve,

retrieve, if poſſible, told Celadon that he muſt not take any notice of her lady's words; that ſhe went very ill to bed; that ſhe was delirious, and knew not what ſhe ſaid. This, however, had no effect upon him; he was too well convinced of the injury that had been done him, and loaded his tranſgreſſing wife with every invective that a huſband, in his circumſtances, could invent.

But certainly it is impoſſible for any woman to behave with greater courage and reſolution than Marcella now did; ſhe preſently regained her ſenſes, and after having made Rachel leave the room, a moment's reflection ſerved her to reply to the reproaches made her by her huſband, in theſe terms—

Marcella. Well, Sir, I confeſs appearances are againſt me, nor do I wonder at, nor will reſent the aſperity of your treatment. Though guilty of no real crime, my vanity has led me into a folly which merits all you have ſaid to me. I have not, in fact, diſhonoured either myſelf or you, and my behaviour this night has only mortified the pride and arrogance of a man who would have rivalled you in my eſteem and affection.

Celadon. Excellent, i'faith—beyond imagination. I have been told, indeed, that a woman need but look down upon her apron-ſtring to find an excuſe for the moſt enormous crime ſhe can be guilty of; but this of yours is ſuch a one, as cannot fail of giving a good deal of diverſion in a court of judicature; though I ſcarce think it will ſave either Fillamour's eſtate from the penalty the law inflicts on an attempt to baſtardize an honourable family, or his throat from the juſtice of my ſword.

The boldneſs of Marcella was not to be awed by theſe menaces; ſhe found he had too much underſtanding to be impoſed upon by the ſhallow artifice ſhe had made uſe of; that he now heartily diſpiſed her, and that ſhe had no longer any meaſures to preſerve with him: therefore, collecting all the courage ſhe was miſtreſs of, ſhe threw her eyes upon him with a contempt equal to that which he looked upon her, and made him this reply—

Marcella. 'Tis mighty well, Sir; you are at your liberty to make uſe of all the weapons in your power for revenge; but I would have you to remember, that whether Fillamour cuts your throat, or you cut his, and are hanged for it, the matter will be of little importance to me; and as for a court of judicature, I believe you will find it very difficult to make good any accuſations you may exhibit againſt me there: no one ever ſaw me in bed with Fillamour, much leſs can prove any criminal converſation between us, ſo that the ridicule would turn wholly upon yourſelf; and perhaps provoke me, as I have had no child by you, to bring in a bill of impotency, in which caſe I ſhould have all my fortune returned; a thing your preſent circumſtances would not very well bear, as ſome part of your eſtate is already mortgaged.

To all this Celadon was able to make no other reply, than that he ſtood amazed at her audacity; that he found ſhe was abandoned to all ſenſe of ſhame; that ſhe was a monſter of impudence, and ſuch like: at which ſhe ſeemed not in the leaſt moved, but proceeded to reaſon with him in the ſame determined faſhion ſhe had begun.

Marcella. Look you, Celadon, all the fury you can be poſſeſſed of will remedy nothing: let us argue like rational creatures; whatever opinion we may have of each other, the only way to preſerve either of our characters, is to live well together in the eyes of the world. I tell you that I am innocent, and it is for your eaſe and intereſt, as well as mine, that you ſhould believe I am ſo; which if you do, I faithfully promiſe to regulate my conduct in ſuch a manner as to bring no diſreputation on myſelf, or diſhonour to you; but if you fly into extremes, you will oblige me to do the ſame; and, what but our mutual infamy and deſtruction can be the end of ſuch a conteſt? I leave you to conſider on what I have ſaid, and wait your cooler moments for an anſwer.

With theſe words ſhe went haſtily out of the room. Celadon offered not to detain her, but continued walking backwards and forwards, teſtifying, by ſeveral diſordered geſtures, the inward agitations of his mind. After ſome moments paſſed in the blunt expreſſions of his rage, he called to the ſervants, moſt of whom were now ſtirring, to get a bed prepared for him in another chamber; but I am of opinion, that when he retired thither, it was leſs to ſleep than to reflect how it would beſt become him to behave under the

the ſhocking circumſtance he was now involved in.

Finding no farther diſcoveries were likely to be made at this time, I left the houſe on the firſt opening of the ſtreet-door, and returned home; where, fatigued as I was for want of reſt, the aſtoniſhment I was in at the behaviour of Marcella would not ſuffer the leaſt ſlumber to cloſe my eyes.

For ſome days I was extremely impatient to know the reſult of this affair; but, hearing no talk of it about town, began to conclude that the wife's arguments had prevailed, and the huſband had ſubmitted his reſentment to his convenience. I ſoon found I was not deceived in my conjectures, for in leſs than a week I ſaw Celadon and Marcella taking the air together in their own coach, with the ſame appearance of ſerenity in both their countenances, as if nothing of the adventure I have been relating had ever happened.

CHAP. V.

SHEWS, THAT THOUGH A REMISSNESS OF CARE IN THE BRINGING UP OF CHILDREN, CAN SCARCE FAIL OF BEING ATTENDED WITH VERY BAD CONSEQUENCES; YET, THAT AN OVER EXACT CIRCUMSPECTION IN MINUTE THINGS, MAY SOMETIMES PROVE EQUALLY PERNICIOUS TO THEIR FUTURE WELFARE.

VARIOUS were the reports concerning Alinda, both while ſhe was alive, and after her deceaſe; but all the world could ſay with any certainty, either of her affairs or conduct, might be comprized in the following articles.

That ſhe was the only child of a very eminent and wealthy merchant in the city, who, on the death of his wife, left off buſineſs, and having purchaſed an eſtate of near a thouſand pounds a year in the country, retired thither to paſs the remainder of his days, taking Alinda with him, at that time about ten years of age.

That through ſome peculiarities in his temper, ſhe was educated in a very odd faſhion, ſecluded from all converſation with the neighbouring gentry, and ſcarce ſuffered to ſpeak to any one out of their own family.

That after his death, which happened in her ſeventeenth year, ſhe returned, with the conſent of her guardians, to London, lived in a manner ſuitable to her fortune, and had many advantageous offers of marriage, all which ſhe rejected without giving any reaſon for doing ſo.

That at one and twenty ſhe fell into a waſting diſorder, which was judged to proceed rather from ſome inward grief preying upon her ſpirits, than from any diſtemper of the body; it baffled, however, all the ſkill of the phyſicians, and ſhe expired after a tedious languiſhment of near three years, leaving the poſſeſſion of her eſtate to a nephew of her father's, who was the next of kin.

All theſe things, I ſay, were publick; but as to the motive which made her avoid liſtening to any propoſals for changing her condition, or the cauſe of that melancholy which brought on her death, every one ſpoke of them as they thought proper, and according as the diſpoſitions of their own hearts inclined them to judge.

Few, however, were charitable enough to put the beſt conſtruction on her conduct; ſome ſaid ſhe was a man-hater; others, that loving the ſex too well, ſhe could not think of entering into a ſtate which muſt confine her to one alone. Thoſe who entertained the moſt favourable opinion, imagined ſhe had unhappily engaged her heart where there was no poſſibility of a return: this laſt conjecture ſeemed indeed moſt probable, and gained ground after ſhe fell into that heavy languor which excluded her from all thoſe pleaſures ſhe had been accuſtomed to partake, and at length deprived her of life; but all this, to make uſe of the vulgar adage, was ſpeaking without book; my gift of inviſibility gave me alone the means of penetrating into the myſtery.

As I had been acquainted with her, and viſited her while ſhe continued to ſee company, I frequently ſent, or called to enquire after her health. One day when I did ſo, a ſervant belonging to her kinſman and heir at law came to the door at the ſame time, and we both received for anſwer, that ſhe expired the night before.

The fellow ran directly to inform his

master, to whom these tidings would probably be not unwelcome; and I went home, clapped on my Belt of Invisibility, and returned in a short time to the house of Alinda. The reader will perhaps wonder for what reason, and it is not fit I should keep him in ignorance.

There was a clergyman lived in the house with her, and performed the office of a chaplain; he was a person of whom her father having conceived a high opinion, had taken into his family, and set over her in the manner of a preceptor, and he had ever since continued with her. I had several times dined with him at her table, and perceived he professed an extraordinary sanctity, and the extremest regard for the welfare of his fair patroness; and this it was that made me desirous of seeing in what manner he would behave upon her death.

I expected to have found him either in his own chamber, bewailing the early fate of so beneficent a friend, or sitting by her corpse religiously moralizing on the shadowy happiness of this transitory world; but, after seeking him in vain in these and several other rooms, at last I discovered him in a closet, where I knew she reposited her things of greatest value; he was busily employed in rummaging her bureau, from the little cell of which I saw him convey, as near as I could guess, between two and three hundred pieces of gold, and several bank-bills to a much greater amount; he then pulled out a drawer which contained her jewels; he first took up one, then another, surveyed them with a greedy eye, but laid them down again, and shut the drawer; but, after a moment's pause, opened it a second time, and took out a ring set round with large brilliants. 'I may keep this,' cried he; 'it will 'scarce be missed, or, if it be, I can pre-'tend she made me a present of it in her 'life-time, and nobody will suspect the 'contrary.' Here he gave over his search, locked the bureau, put the key into his pocket, and went into his own room.

It would be hard for me to determine, whether astonishment or indignation was most predominant in me at this sight; I wished never to have beheld it, or that I had been at liberty to pluck the sacred robe from off the back of that vile prophaner of his order. I was going away with a mind more troubled than I can well express, when one of Alinda's maids came running into the room with a sealed packet in her hand, and delivered it to this disciple of Judas Iscariot, telling him at the same time, that it had been found under her mistress's pillow just after her death, but that she had forgot in the hurry to bring it to him before.

He replied, with an affected indifference, that it was very well; that he would look over the papers, and take care that whatever injunctions they contained should be fulfilled; and with these words dismissed her.

The superscription on the cover of this packet was to a lady with whom Alinda had been extremely intimate, but had not seen for a considerable time, she being excluded, as well as the rest of her acquaintance, after she fell into that deep melancholy which ended her days. The priest immediately broke the seal, and found a little letter to the above-mentioned lady, the contents whereof were as follow—

'DEAR MADAM,

'THAT I have not seen you so long 'has not been owing to want of 'friendship, but to a resolution of de-'priving myself of every thing that was 'agreeable to me in life; and that I do 'not now, in these last moments of my 'life, ask to see you, is only because I 'would not tax your pity with the sight 'of so sad an object. I am blasted, my 'dear friend, withered in my bloom, 'and scarce the shadow of what I was. 'The inclosed memoirs will inform you 'of the cruel cause, which I intreat you 'will publish to the world after my de-'cease; the shocking tale may perhaps 'be a serviceable warning to some pa-'rents as well as children. I have given 'my cousin ****** orders concerning 'some things I would have done; among 'the number of which is, that he will 'present you with my hoop diamond 'ring. I beg you will accept and wear 'it in remembrance of your dying 'friend,

'ALINDA.'

He started, bent his brows, turned pale and red by turns, and seemed in great confusion while looking over this little epistle; but all his emotions were very much increased on examining the papers that accompanied it: still as he read, he tore the leaves asunder and threw them on the fire, which happening not

not to burn very fiercely, I was quick enough to snatch from the intended devastation, and convey into my pocket, while he was taken up with the remaining pages, and thought himself secure by the tale of his misdeeds being extinct in all devouring flames.

He had but just finished, when a servant came running into the room, and told him that Mr. ***** was below; and having been informed that Alinda's keys had been delivered to him, demanded to speak with him immediately. On this, the artful hypocrite composed his countenance, drew every feature into the attitude of solemn sadness, and holding a white handkerchief to his eyes, went down to act the part he thought would best become him before the kinsman of Alinda.

I followed close at his heels into the parlour, where Mr. ***** and two other persons waited for him. He began, with well-dissembled grief, to expatiate on the loss the world had in so excellent a lady as Alinda; and failed not, in his harangue, artfully to intermix some praises on himself, for the good principles his precepts had ingrafted on her mind.

Mr. ***** seemed to take very little notice of all he said on this occasion, and prevented him from going so far as perhaps he otherwise would have done, by telling him, in a very grave and reserved tone, that he was in great haste at present; that he came thither only to give the necessary orders concerning his cousin's funeral; and that till the melancholy ceremony was over, he should put a friend in possession of the house, and whatever effects it contained, therefore expected the keys of every thing should be immediately delivered.

To this the parson replied, that he had got them into his hands with no other view than to secure them for him, who had the undoubted right to all which his dear benefactress had been mistress of: 'For indeed,' continued he, 'I apprehended some foul play might have 'been attempted, as at the hour of her 'decease she had none but servants about 'her, some of whom had been too lately 'taken into the family to have given 'any great proofs of their integrity.'

After this they went through every room, examining what was to be found; all which scrutiny, as yet, afforded the heir no reason for complaint. On opening the above-mentioned bureau, and looking over Alinda's jewels, he missed not the ring he had been defrauded of; but when the other private drawers presented him so little of what he expected, he could not forbear discovering some suspicion, as it must be owned he had sufficient cause; for the person who had been before-hand with him in the search, had left no more than eight guineas and one six and thirty piece in specie, with three or four bills of an inconsiderable value.

'I am surprized,' said Mr. *****, 'that a woman of my cousin's fortune 'should leave herself so bare of cash; 'and cannot imagine by what means 'she dissipated so large a yearly income.' —'Alas, Sir!' replied the pretended zealot, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, 'it ought not to appear strange 'to you, that a lady of your excellent 'kinswoman's charitable and benevolent 'disposition should refuse nothing in her 'power, when the cries of distress, and 'the moans of affliction, called for her 'assistance. If you would know in what 'manner she disposed of her money, enquire of hospitals, the prisons, and the 'necessitous petitioners that every day 'received their sustenance from her 'bounty, and you will find an early account of her expences in her large and 'numerous donations.'

Mr. ***** only answered sullenly, that he should be better able to judge how he ought to think of the affair after he had spoke to her steward. On which the other, clapping his hand upon his breast, was beginning to make many asseverations, that till that moment he never knew what sum or sums the lady had by her when she died, or had ever looked, nor even entertained a thought of looking into any place where it might be supposed she kept her money. I staid not, however, to hear what effect his hypocrisy produced, but went home, being impatient to see the contents of Alinda's manuscript.

CHAP. VI.

WILL FULLY SATISFY THE CURIOSITY THE FORMER MAY HAVE EXCITED.

THE haste I made in snatching the following papers from the flames, happily preserved them so entirely from

the deſtruction to which they had been deſtined, that though the edges were in many places much ſcorched, yet not a ſingle word throughout the whole was any way damaged; and the reader may depend on having the ſtory as perfect as if he ſaw it in the heroine's own hand.

MEMOIRS OF THE UNFORTUNATE ALINDA, WROTE BY HERSELF, AND FAITHFULLY TRANSCRIBED FROM THE ORIGINAL COPY.

'I Am ſenſible that many people have 'been very buſy with my fame while 'living; nor do I expect to be treated 'with leſs ſeverity after I am dead: I 'cannot, however, think of an eternal 'ſeparation from this world, without 'leaving ſomething behind me which 'may ſerve to clear up thoſe paſſages in 'my conduct which, by their being 'myſterious, have given room for cen-'ſure; and I do not this with any view 'of ſoftening the aſperity of the ill-'natured for the errors I have been 'guilty of, or of exciting compaſſion 'in the more generous and gentle for 'my misfortunes, but merely to the end 'that, if I am condemned, I may be 'condemned for real, not imaginary, 'facts.

'Sorry am I to accuſe a father who 'tenderly loved me: yet certain it is, 'that his over anxiety for my welfare 'has been the primary ſource of every 'woe my heart has laboured under; 'and that, by his miſtaken endeavours 'to make me great and happy, I have 'been rendered the moſt miſerable of 'created beings.

'The fortune I was born to be poſ-'ſeſſed of, and ſome natural endow-'ments his affection fancied in me, 'made him flatter himſelf with the hopes 'of ſeeing me one day blaze forth in all 'the pomp of quality; nor could he 'endure the thoughts of marrying me 'to any man beneath the rank of right 'honourable: and for fear any partial 'inclination of my own ſhould diſap-'point theſe high-raiſed expectations, 'he kept me from the converſation of 'every one whom he thought capable of 'attracting a heart unbiaſſed by inte-'reſt and unambitious of grandeur.

'Soon after my mother's death, he 'quitted buſineſs, and retired to an 'eſtate he had ſome time before pur-'chaſed in the country. When we 'removed, I was too young to have any 'taſte for the pleaſures of the town, 'and regretted only the want of thoſe 'play-fellows I had left behind: in-'deed, I wonder that I was not quite 'moped. I was ſuffered to go to no 'ſchool, though there was a great one 'very near us; never ſtirred beyond the 'precincts of our garden-walls; went 'not to church, becauſe there it would 'have been impoſſible for me not to ſee 'and be ſeen. No company viſited us; 'for my father deprived himſelf of the 'pleaſure of converſing with any of the 'neighbouring gentry, for fear that, as 'I grew up, I might take a liking to 'ſome one or other of their ſons, none 'of whom he thought a match good 'enough for me, as they were not dig-'nified with titles. I had learned writ-'ing and dancing, but was far from 'being perfect in either; and my fa-'ther, being unwilling I ſhould be 'without theſe accompliſhments, took 'the pains himſelf to ſet me copies to 'improve me in the one; and at length 'provided a maſter, too old and too 'ugly to give him any apprehenſions, 'to inſtruct me in the other. Beſides 'theſe two avocations, I had no amuſe-'ment except reading; which, as I 'much delighted in, my father con-'ſtantly ſupplied me with ſuch books 'as he thought proper for my ſex and 'age.

'Excepting ſome treatiſes of divi-'nity, the ſubjects of my entertainment 'afforded little improvement to my un-'derſtanding, they conſiſting only in 'romances, and ſome very old plays; 'ſo that the ideas they inſpired me with 'were as antiquated as the habits worn 'in the days of Queen Elizabeth; and 'I was utterly ignorant of the modes, 'manners, and cuſtoms, of the age I 'lived in.

'In this ſtupid and diſpiriting 'ſituation did I paſs full nineteen 'months; about the expiration of 'which time, my father happened into 'company with a perſon who wears the 'ſacred appearance of an eccleſiaſtick, 'but is in reality one of thoſe men-'tioned in Holy Writ by the name of 'wolves in ſheeps cloathing. His out-'ward behaviour ſeems directed by the 'miniſters of grace and goodneſs, while

'in

'in his treacherous heart a thousand 'fiends lie in wait to bring ruin and de-'struction on the credulous listener to 'his wiles.—But, before I proceed in 'my unhappy story, it is fit I should 'give a more particular character of the 'wretch who has so great a share in it.

'First, for his extraction.—His fa-'ther was a Frenchman, servant to a 'person of distinction in Normandy: 'but having more ambition than ho-'nesty, found means to rob his master 'of a considerable sum, and came over 'to England, where he set up for a 'gentleman, and a most zealous Pro-'testant; told a long plausible story of 'the great hardships he had sustained 'on the score of religion, and found 'here the same pity and encouragement 'as many others had done who fly here 'for an asylum on the same pretences.

'Soon after his arrival, he married 'a Dutchwoman, by whom he had a 'son who inherits all his fa her's vir-'tues, and is the person whose story is 'so unhappily interwoven with my 'own.

'Young Le Bris (for that is the name 'of this worthy family) discovered in 'his youth some indications of a good 'capacity for learning; insomuch that 'a certain lord, taking a great fancy to 'him, sent him to Westminster School, 'and afterwards to the university, in 'order to qualify him for the pulpit; 'assuring him, that he should not be 'without a benefice as soon as he should 'be fit to receive it.

'But he had scarce compleated his stu-'dies for that purpose, when all his 'present support and future expect-'ations vanished, on the sudden death 'of his noble patron; which was fol-'lowed, in a few months after, by that 'of his father; so that he was left en-'tirely destitute, his mother not being 'able to afford him the least assistance.

'After many long and fruitless soli-'citations for a living, he was glad to 'accept of a small curacy in one of the 'remotest counties in England, where 'he resided several years; but was at 'last turned out on account of neglect 'of duty, and other misbehaviour. He 'then came back to London, and gave 'out printed bills for teaching French 'and Latin at very low rates; but find-'ing little encouragement that way, 'turned Fleet parson, and earned a pre-'carious sustenance by clandestine mar-'riages.

'It was in these wretched circum-'stances that my father met with him, 'being in town on some business; and 'being told by some one, who it is 'likely knew no more of him than 'what he was pleased to say of himself, 'that he was a very worthy, though 'distressed clergyman, made him the 'offer of a handsome salary to come 'into his family by way of chaplain; 'and withal, to instruct me in the 'French language, and whatever else 'was fit for me to learn, or he was ca-'pable of teaching. He readily em-'braced the proposal; and, on my fa-'ther's return, came down wi h him.

'My father presented him to me as a 'kind of tutor or preceptor; told me I 'must submit myself to his directions; 'be attentive to all he said to me; and, 'in every thing, treat him with the 'greatest respect and reverence: "For," 'added he, "it is by the lessons he is "capable of giving you, that you alone "can make any shining figure in the "station wherein I hope to see you "placed."

'It will, perhaps, afford some matter 'of surprize, that my father, who had 'hitherto preserved such an extreme cau-'tion in preventing my having the least 'conversation with any man, should 'now so strenuously recommend this 'person to me: but it must be consi-'dered, that he was no less than six or 'seven and forty years of age; that, 'though not deformed, he was far from 'handsome; and, besides, had a certain 'austerity in his manners which could 'not be very agreeable to youth.

'It was, indeed, some time before I 'could be contented with the dominion 'given him over me; but my obedience to 'my father obliging me to behave to-'wards him with esteem, custom at last 'converted that complaisance, which was 'at first no more than feigned, into sin-'cere. A kind of affection, by degrees, 'mingled itself with the reverence I was 'bid to pay him; I was never so happy 'as in the hours set apart for receiving 'his instructions; and the thoughts of 'the benefits that might be supposed to 'accrue from them, afforded less plea-'sure than the praises I was always cer-'tain he would bestow on my docility. 'In fine, I not only loved the teacher

'for

'for the precept's sake, but, as the poet 'says—

"I lov'd the precepts for the teacher's "sake."

'Nor is it to be wondered at that I 'tasted more satisfaction in his society 'than I had ever known before. I 'wanted not ideas, though hitherto I 'had nothing to improve them. I had 'been allowed to converse with none 'but the servants; who could only di-'vert me with idle tales of thieves, appa-'ritions, and haunted houses. My tu-'tor, after having finished his graver 'lessons, would frequently entertain me 'with some extraordinary incident or 'other, either taken from history or ro-'mance; but whether real or fictitious, 'I had sense enough to know were 'such as enlarged my understanding as 'well as charmed my ears.

'It is certain, indeed, that he spared 'no pains to insinuate himself into my 'good graces; and no less certain also, 'that the ungrateful design he had in 'doing so succeeded, to the utter de-'struction of the whole happiness of my 'future life, and, at last, of my life it-'self, as will appear by these memoirs; 'which, while I am writing, I know 'not whether I shall have strength to 'finish.

'I shall therefore reduce my unhappy 'story into as short a compass as I can. 'In spite of the little amiableness this 'tutor had in his person, in spite of the 'vast disparity of years between us, I 'conceived the most tender affection for 'him. Alas! I was then too young, 'too innocent, to know what was 'meant by the word Love, any farther 'than that love which we naturally bear 'to a father, brother, or some other 'near relation; and thought not what 'I felt for him was any more, or would 'be attended with any other conse-'quences; and as I apprehended no 'shame or danger in the kindness I had 'for him, endeavoured not to put a stop 'to the growth of it, nor even to con-'ceal it.

'But Le Bris saw much better into 'my heart than I did myself; and dread-'ing left my father should be alarmed 'at the too open fondness of my beha-'viour to him, began to treat me with 'less familiarity, and exerted the ma-'ster much more than he had done. 'This change both surprized and grieved 'me: I bore it, however, for two whole 'days, without seeming to take any no-'tice of it; but on the third, being alone 'with him in his closet, where I con-'stantly went every morning to receive 'my lessons—"What is the matter "with you, my dear tutor?" said I; "I "hope I have done nothing to offend "you? I am sure I would not wil-"lingly be guilty of deserving that you "should frown upon me."—"No, "my precious charge," replied he, af-'ter a pause, "it is not in your na-"ture to give offence; but I would not "incur your father's displeasure either "towards you or me. Men are apt to "be jealous of the affections of their "children; and I am sometimes afraid "that he should think you love me al-"most as well as you do him."—"In-"deed I do so—quite as well," cried I 'eagerly. "But why should he be an-"gry at that, when he bid me use you "with the same love and respect as I "did himself?"

"People, on some occasions," an-'swered he, "will be displeased at a "too exact performance of their own "commands; and if my worthy patron, "your father, should happen to be of "this opinion, the consequence would "infallibly be an eternal separation be-"tween us; he would drive me from "his house, and I should never see my "pretty charge again."

"If you think so," returned I, "though I have all kind of dissimula-"tion, I will make him believe I am "weary of learning of you, and that I "cannot abide you."—"Dear, pretty "angel!" cried he, tenderly taking me 'in his arms, "there is no need of go-"ing to such extremes; I would only "have you behave with more distance "towards me than you have done of "late: and it will not be amiss if you "sometimes complain that I set you too "hard lessons; because, if you should "seem to learn too fast, he may begin "to think there will soon be no occasion "for a tutor."—"Well," said I, "I "will do every thing you bid me; for "indeed it would almost break my heart "to part with you." Here he kissed 'off the tears that fell from my eyes in 'speaking these last words, and I re-'turned all his endearments with the 'same

'same affection as the fondeſt child 'would do thoſe of the moſt indulgent 'parent.

'It will perhaps ſeem a little ſtrange, 'that a girl turned of thirteen, as I 'then was, ſhould think or act in the 'manner I did; but the way in which I 'had been brought up, left me in the 'ſame ignorance and innocence as 'others of ſix or ſeven years old.

'I obeyed his inſtructions with ſo 'much exactneſs, that my father was 'far from ſuſpecting either my folly, or 'the baſeneſs of the perſon he had ſet 'over me. The reſt of the family were 'no more quick-ſighted; nor could it 'be expected they ſhould be ſo. Our 'houſe-keeper, though a very good, was 'a ſilly old woman, and knew nothing 'beyond the œconomy of thoſe affairs 'committed to her charge. The maid 'who waited on me was her daughter, 'and had been bred to think every man 'who wore the habit of a parſon was 'to be worſhipped; and the other ſer-'vants were too ſeldom with us to have 'any opportuninity of making diſco-'veries.

'I arrived at my fourteenth year. 'My father kept my birth-day ſo far, 'as to order ſomething better than ordi-'nary for dinner, and drank my health 'ſeveral times at table. Among other 'diſcourſe concerning me, he ſaid to 'Le Bris—"Well, doctor, your pupil "will now begin to think herſelf a wo-"man, and I muſt find a huſband for "her who will be able to reward the "care you have taken of her with a "good fat benefice." To which the 'fawning hypocrite replied, that the 'pleaſure of ſeeing his worthy patron's 'daughter happy would be to him the 'beſt benefice he could obtain.

'Nothing farther paſſed, at this time, 'on the ſame ſubject; but the next morn-'ing, when I was alone with my tutor 'in his cloſet—"Do you remember, "my dear Miſs," cried he, with a very 'melancholy air, "what your father "ſaid yeſterday? You will be mar-"ried ſoon, and I ſhall loſe you for "ever!"—"Do not talk ſo," replied I 'haſtily; "I do not want to be mar-"ried: but if my father ſhould compel "me to it, all the huſbands in the world "ſhould not make me forget you; no, "you ſhall always live with me; I "would not part from you to be a "dutcheſs."—"Nor would I part "from you," ſaid he, taking me in his 'arms, "for an archbiſhoprick. And "to be plain," continued he, "I have "received letters ſince I have been here, "with the offers of ſeveral great livings; "but I have refuſed them all, rather "than quit my dear pupil."—"Have "you, indeed?" returned I, hanging 'fondly on him; "Oh how kind you "have been! I ſhould be the moſt un-"grateful creature upon earth, if I did "not love you dearly for it."—"But "will you always keep me with you?" 'cried he. "As long as I live," an-'ſwered I. "Will you ſwear it?" re-'joined he. "Yes," anſwered I; "a "thouſand and a thouſand times over, "if you deſire it."

'The wretch did not fail to take me 'at my word: I bound myſelf, by the 'moſt ſolemn imprecations that words 'could form, that, when I became miſ-'treſs of my actions, he ſhould always 'live with me. After this, the hours 'we paſſed together were employed more 'in improving the fooliſh affection I had 'for him, than in any leſſons for im-'proving my underſtanding. My fa-'ther imputed the ſlow progreſs I made 'in my ſtudies not to any want of abi-'lities in my teacher, but to my own 'neglect, and often chid me for it; 'which I bore patiently, as I believed it 'the ſureſt means of keeping my dear 'tutor with me. This he took ſo kindly, 'that he told me one day, he flattered 'himſelf I loved him almoſt as well as 'I did my father. "I hope it is no "ſin," cried I childiſhly, "if I love "you quite as well."—"Far from it," 'anſwered he: "you are only his "daughter by nature, but you are mine "by affection; you are the child of my "ſoul, and therefore ought to love "me better."—"I am glad of that," 'rejoined I; "for indeed I do love you "a great deal better—I am ſure I do." 'It will ſcarce be doubted but that he 'now beſtowed upon me thoſe endear-'ments I had declared myſelf ſo well ſa-'tiſfied with; and ſome minutes after, 'as I had turned to a looking glaſs to 'adjuſt ſome diſorder in my head dreſs, 'he pulled me to him, and making me 'ſit upon his knee—"You are very "pretty, my dear," ſaid he; "and "have no defect in your ſhape, but be-"ing a little too flat before." With 'theſe words, he thruſt one of his hands 'within my ſtays; telling me, that

'handling

'handling my breasts would make 'them grow, and I should then be a 'perfect beauty.

'Not conscious of any guilt, I was 'ignorant of shame; and thinking every 'thing he did was right, made not the 'least resistance; but suffered him, by 'degrees, to proceed to liberties, which 'had I known the meaning of, I should 'have stabbed him for attempting; but, 'as I have somewhere read—

"By no example warn'd how to beware,
"My very innocence became my snare."

'It will perhaps be supposed, that the 'perfidious man did not stop here, but 'proceeded yet farther, to the utter 'completion of my dishonour; but I 'shall do him the justice to say, that 'he never offered any such thing; though 'I have good reasons to believe he was 'prevented only by his fear of the con-'sequences that might have attended it, 'to the ruin of a design which promised 'him more satisfaction than the enjoy-'ment of my person.

'In the ridiculous way I have been 'describing did we continue till I was 'in my seventeenth year; about which 'time, my father being obliged to go 'to London on a law affair, he left the 'sole management of the family, as 'well as of myself, to his favourite 'chaplain, till he should return, which 'he expected to do in two months.

'He had not been gone full three 'weeks before a stranger came to our 'house on a visit to my tutor: he re-'ceived him with great marks of civi-'lity; and told me afterwards that he 'was the land-steward of a nobleman, 'who had sent him on purpose to court 'his acceptance of a benefice worth near 'eight hundred pounds per annum. 'As I suspected not the truth of this, 'I was terribly frightened; and cried 'out—"Then you will leave me at "last!"—"It would be with an ex-"treme reluctance I should do so," 'replied he; "but what can I do? If "I should hereafter be exposed to any "misfortunes, how would the world "blame me for having refused such an "offer?"—"What misfortunes," said 'I, "have you to fear? I shall always "have enough to support my dear "tutor."

"My dear child," resumed he, "you "forget that, when once you are mar-"ried, there will be nothing in your "power; all will be your husband's, "who may take it into his head to turn "me out of doors directly."—"No "such matter," replied I hastily; "for "I will make him promise and swear "beforehand to keep you always in the "family."—"Few men," said he, "pay any regard, after they become "husbands, to the promises and vows "they made when they were lovers. "In fine, my little angel," continued 'he, taking me tenderly in his arms, "there is but one way to secure our "lasting happiness, to which if you "agree, I will immediately refuse the "great offer now made me, with all my "future hopes of rising in the church, "and devote myself eternally to you."

'These last words I thought so highly 'obliging to me, that I hung about his 'neck, kissed his cheek, and cried I 'would do every thing he would have 'me. He then told me that a writing 'should be drawn up between us, by 'which we should mutually bind our-'selves, under the penalty of the half 'of what either should be possessed of, 'never to separate.

'On my ready compliance with this 'proposal he ventured to make a se-'cond, even more impudent than the 'first. After seeming to consider a lit-'tle within himself—"I have been "thinking," said he, "that if the per-"son you shall marry should happen "to be of a cross, perverse nature, "though for his own sake he will not "drive me from his house, yet he may "use me so ill as to compel me to go out "of it of my own accord: suppose, "therefore, you should bind yourself "by the writing I have mentioned, "and under the same penalty, never to "marry any man without my con-"sent?"

"Bless me!" cried I, a little sur-'prized, "how can I do this? You "know I must obey my father."—"Heaven forbid you should do other-"wise!" rejoined the artful hypocrite; "you may be sure I shall never oppose "either his will, or your own inclina-"tion, in the choice of a husband: "what I speak of is only a thing of "form, which, when shewn to your "husband, will oblige him to treat me "with gratitude and respect."

'I was entirely satisfied with this; 'and replied, I would do what he de-

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'fired as soon as he pleased: on which—"It happens luckily," said he, "that "the gentleman who came here on the "business I told you of was bred to "the law; I will let him know as "much as is necessary of our affair, "and get him to draw up a proper in-"strument." In speaking these words, 'he left me, and went in search of his 'friend, who at that time was walking 'in the garden, waiting, no doubt, his 'coming.

'I had little time allowed me to re-'flect on what I was about to do. Le 'Bris immediately returned, bringing 'the lawyer with him; the latter of 'whom desired to receive instructions 'from my own mouth for what he was 'to write; and accordingly I repeated 'the sense of the obligation I was to lay 'myself under, leaving it to him to put 'it in such words as he should find 'proper. If I had been mistress of the 'least share of common reason, I must 'have seen that all this scheme was a 'thing previously concerted between 'these two villains; for the lawyer im-'mediately pulled out of his pocket a 'large parchment, with seals fixed to 'it, and every thing requisite to make 'the instrument firm and valid: but I 'was infatuated; all my little under-'standing was subjected to the will of 'this wicked tutor; I gave an implicit 'faith to all he said, and paid an im-'plicit obedience to all his dictates.

'The lawyer took his leave next day, 'and nothing material happened till 'within a week of the time my father 'was expected home; when, instead of 'himself, came the melancholy account 'that he had been seized with an apo-'plectick fit, and, though he recovered 'from it, expired within two hours 'after. He had made his will about 'a year before, by which he left me sole 'heir of every thing he was in possession 'of, except a few legacies; and in case 'his demise should happen before I 'was married, or of age appointed 'two gentlemen for his executors and 'my guardians. They both wrote to 'me, as did also my cousin *****, ac-'quainting me that it was necessary I 'should come to London directly on 'this occasion, and each inviting me 'to their respective houses; which, as 'they lived in different parts of the 'town, I was at liberty to chuse which 'I liked best.

'My tutor, however, dissuaded me 'from accepting any of their offers; 'and told me he would write to a friend 'in London to provide a ready-fur-'nished house for my reception, till 'things were settled, and I should re-'solve whether I would reside in town 'or country. Accordingly he did so; 'and when we came within ten miles 'of London, we were met on the road by 'the lawyer, who, as I have since dis-'covered, was his chief agent in every 'thing. He conducted us to a house 'in Jermyn Street, which was indeed 'very neat and commodious.'

'It was late when we arrived; but 'I did not fail to send the next morn-'ing to my two guardians and cousin '*****, who all came to see me the 'same day, and expressed themselves in 'very affectionate terms. I presented 'my tutor to them, as a person for 'whom my father had a high esteem; 'on which they treated him with that 'respect they supposed him to deserve.

'I now entered into a scene of life al-'together new to me. Several distant 'relations, whom I knew only by their 'names, and many other gentlemen 'and ladies who had been acquainted 'with my mother, came to pay their 'respects to me. All my mornings 'were taken up with messages and 'compliments; and all my afternoons 'with receiving and returning visits. 'How strange was the transition! From 'being confined to the narrow precincts 'of a lone country mansion, I had now 'the whole metropolis to range in; 'instead of the grave lessons of two old 'men, my ears were now continually 'filled with the flattering praises of ad-'dressing beaus; instead of having no-'thing to amuse my hours, new di-'versions, new entertainments, crouded 'upon each moment; and I was in-'cessantly hurried from one pleasure to 'another, till my head grew giddy with 'the whirl of promiscuous pleasure.

'As I was young, not ugly, and 'looked upon as a rich heiress, pro-'posals of marriage were every day 'made to me; all which I communi-'cated to my tutor: but though many 'of them were much to my advantage, 'he always found some pretence or 'other for refusing his consent; and I 'accordingly rejected them to the sur-'prize of all who knew me, and the great 'dissatisfaction of my best friends.

'He was not, however, half-pleased 'with the gay manner in which I lived; 'and, as soon as the affairs relating to 'my estate were settled, would fain have 'prevailed upon me to return into the 'country: but I had too high a relish 'for the diversions of the town to pay 'that regard to his advice I had for-'merly done; and, instead of comply-'ing with it, quitted the house I was 'in, hired another upon lease, and fur-'nished it in the most elegant manner I 'could. He grew very grave on my 'behaviour; but as I kept firm to both 'the engagements I had made with him, 'he had no pretence to complain of my 'actions in other matters.

'For a time, indeed, my head was 'not the least turned towards marriage: 'I thought no farther of the men than 'to be vain and delighted with their 'flatteries. Happy would it have been 'for me had I continued always in this 'mind! But my ill fate too soon, alas! 'presented me with an object which 'convinced me that all the joys of pub-'lick admiration are nothing, when 'compared to one soft hour with the 'youth we love, and by whom we think 'we are beloved.

'I believe there is little need for me 'to say that this object, so enchanting 'to my senses, was the young, the hand-'some, the accomplished Amasis. The 'world, to whom he made no secret of 'the passion he professed for me, was also 'witness in what manner I received it: 'we appeared together in all publick 'places; I treated him in all companies 'with a deference which shewed the 'esteem I had for him. My friends 'approved my choice; and the union 'between us was looked upon as a 'thing so absolutely determined, that 'many believed the ceremony was al-'ready over, when, to their great sur-'prize, they saw at once that we were 'utterly broke off; and, in a very short 'time after, the ungrateful Amasis be-'come the husband of another.

'My tutor, on perceiving me inclined 'to favour Amasis more than I had 'ever done any of those who had hi-'therto addressed me, began to rail at 'him, and tell me a thousand ridiculous 'stories he pretended to have heard in 'relation to his conduct. I still retained 'too much reverence for this wicked 'man to contradict what he said, but 'not enough to enable me to conquer 'my new passion: I loved Amasis, 'and continued to give him daily proofs 'of it. This so incensed him, that he 'told me, one day, that he wondered I 'would encourage the courtship of a 'man whom I must never expect to 'marry. "Why not, Sir?" answered 'I: "neither his birth nor fortune are "inferior to mine."—"Suppose them "so," rejoined he, "the most material "thing is wanting, which is my con-"sent."—"When I gave you that "power over me," said I, "you pro-"mised never to thwart my inclina-"tion."—"I did so," replied he; "but, to be plain with you, I then ex-"pected all your inclination would be "in favour of myself."—"Yourself!" 'cried I, more surprized than words 'can describe. "Yes, Alinda," re-'sumed he; "methinks the thing "should not appear so odd to you. Call "back to your remembrance the fami-"liarities that have passed between us, "and then justify, if you can, to virtue "or to modesty, the least desire of giv-"ing yourself to any other man."

'Rage, astonishment, and shame, for 'the folly I had been guilty of, so over-'whelmed my heart at this reproach, 'that I had not power to speak one 'word; but stood looking on him with 'a countenance which, I believe, suf-'ficiently expressed all those passions, 'while he went on in these terms—

"How often," continued he, "have "you hung about my neck whole hours "together, and, by the warmest fond-"ness, tempted me to take every free-"dom with you but the last; which, if "I had not been possessed of more ho-"nour than you now shew of con-"stancy, I also should have seized, and "left you nothing to bestow upon a "rival?"

'The storm which had been gather-'ing in my breast all the time he had 'been speaking, now burst out with 'the extremest violence: I raved, and 'loaded him with epithets not very be-'coming in me to make use of, yet not 'worse than he deserved. He heard me 'with a sullen silence; but when I 'mentioned the cruelty and baseness of 'upbraiding me with the follies of my 'childish innocence, he told me with a 'sneer, that he would advise me not to 'put that among my catalogue of com-'plaints: "For," said he, "the world "will scarce believe, that a lady of

"fourteen,

" fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen, had the " same inclinations in toying with a " gentleman as a baby has with it's " nurse."

' I would have replied, that the manner in which I was educated kept me ' in the same ignorance as a baby; but ' something within rose in my throat, ' stopping the passage of my breath, and ' I sunk fainting in the chair where I ' was sitting. Whether he was really ' moved with this sight, or only affected ' to be so, I know not; but he ran to ' me, used proper means to bring me to ' myself, and, on my recovery, I found ' myself pressed very tenderly within his ' arms. His touch was now grown ' odious to me; I struggled to get loose. " Be not thus unkind," cried he, holding me still faster; " you once took " pleasure in my embraces, you have " confessed you did. Oh! then, recall " those soft ideas, and we shall both be " happy!"

" No!" answered I, breaking forcibly ' from him; " what then was the effect " of too much innocence, would be " now a guilt for which I should detest " myself as much as I do you!"—" I " still love you," said he. " Prove it, " then," cried I fiercely, " by giving " me up that writing which your artifices ensnared me to sign, and cease " to oppose my marriage with Amasis." —" No, Madam," replied he, " if you " persist in the resolution of marrying " Amasis, half your estate would be a " small consolation to me for the loss of " you; and you cannot sure imagine " me to be weak enough to resign my " claim to the one, after being deprived " of the other!"

' I had not patience to continue this ' discourse, but retired to my chamber; ' where, throwing myself upon the bed, ' I vented some part of the anguish of ' my mind in a flood of tears: after ' which, finding some little ease, I began ' to reflect, that tormenting myself in ' this manner would avail nothing; ' and that I ought rather to try if any ' possible means could be found for extricating me from the labyrinth I was ' entangled in.

' Accordingly I arose, muffled myself up as well as I could to prevent ' being known, took a hackney-coach, ' and went to the chambers of an eminent lawyer. I related to him all the ' circumstances of my unhappy case, ' concealing only the names of the persons concerned in it. He listened attentively to what I said; and when I ' had done, asked me of what age I was ' when I entered into that engagement ' I now wanted to be freed from; which ' question I answering with sincerity, he ' shook his head, and told me that he ' was sorry to assure me I could have no ' relief from law; and that the best, ' and, indeed, the only method I could ' take, was to endeavour to compromise ' the affair with the gentleman.

' I returned home very disconsolate, ' and was above a week without being ' able to resolve on any thing; but my ' impatience to be united to the man I ' loved, and at the same time eased of ' the presence of the man I hated, at ' last determined me to follow the lawyer's advice. I sent for my wicked ' tutor into my chamber; talked to him ' in more obliging terms than I had ' done since the first discovery of his designs upon me; but represented to ' him the absurdity of thinking of marrying me himself; and concluded with ' telling him, that if he would cancel ' the engagement between us, I would ' make him a gratuity of a thousand ' pounds, and also be ready to do him ' any other service in my power.

' He rejected this proposal with the ' greatest contempt. " You are cer" tainly mad, Alinda," said he, " or " take me to be so! A thousand pounds " would be a fine equivalent, indeed, " for the half of your estate, jewels, " rich furniture, plate, and whatever " else you are in possession of; to all " which your marriage will give me an " undoubted claim, and I accordingly " shall seize." —" Suppose I never " marry?" cried I. " Be it so," answered he; " I must still continue to " live with you; and what you offer for " my quitting you does not amount to " five years purchase of my salary and " board as your chaplain."

' These words making me imagine ' his chief objection was to the smallness ' of the sum, I told him I would double, ' nay, even treble it, for the purchase of ' my liberty; but he told me it would ' be in vain for me to tempt him with ' any offers of that kind; that no consideration whatever should prevail with ' him to depart from the agreement be' tween us; and he would always hold ' me to my bargain.

'The determined air with which he 'spoke this, made me think it beſt not 'to urge him any farther at that time. 'The next day, however, and ſeveral 'ſucceeding ones, I failed not to renew 'the diſcourſe; but though I made uſe 'of every argument my reaſon could 'ſupply me with; though I wept, 'pray'd, raved, by turns cajoled and 'threatened; all I could ſay, all I could 'do, was ineffectual; and the more 'I laboured to bring him to compli-'ance, the more ſtubborn his obſtinacy 'grew.

'To make any one ſenſible what it 'was I ſuffered in this cruel dilemma, 'they muſt alſo be made ſenſible to 'what an infinite degree I loved the 'man whom it was now impoſſible for 'me to be happy with; and both theſe 'are inexpreſſible: I ſhall therefore 'only ſay, that I was very near being 'totally deprived of that little ſhare of 'reaſon Heaven had beſtowed upon 'me.

'Amaſis, to whom I had confeſſed 'the tenderneſs I had for him, was all 'this while continually ſoliciting me to 'compleat our union. One day, when 'he was more than ordinarily preſſing on 'this occaſion, and my heart being very 'full, I cried out, almoſt without know-'ing what I ſaid—'Oh, Amaſis! you "know not what you aſk, when you "aſk me to marry you!" This excla-'mation ſurprized him: but having be-'gun, I now went on—'You expect," 'ſaid I, "an eſtate of twelve hundred "pounds a year; but I will not deceive "you, you find me worth only the half "of what you have been made to "hope."—"When I made my ad-"dreſſes to the lovely Alinda," an-'ſwered he, "I had no eye to the for-"tune ſhe might bring me. But where-"fore this fruitleſs trial of my love? Your "guardians have ſhewn me the writings "of your eſtate; and I know to a ſingle "hundred what you are poſſeſſed of."—"Suppoſe," rejoined I, "that I "ſhould have previouſly diſpoſed of the "one half of what otherwiſe our mar-"riage would have given you?"—"I "will ſuppoſe no ſuch thing," replied 'he; "it cannot be!"—"It both can, "and is," ſaid I, burſting into tears; "I have unwarily entered into an en-"gagement, by which I forfeit the "moiety of all I am miſtreſs of, even "to my very jewels, if ever I marry "any man, except on certain condi-"tions; which condition, I am now "well aſſured, I never can obtain."

"Death!" cried he, ſtarting up in a 'fury, "What condition?—When!—"Where!—To whom!—On what ac-"count was this engagement made!" 'Shame would not let me anſwer to 'theſe interrogatories, and I remained 'in a kind of ſtupid ſilence. "If by "any artifices," purſued he, "you "have been ſeduced to ſign a compact "of this wild nature, unfold the whole "of the affair, and depend, that either "the laws, or this avenging arm, ſhall "do you juſtice." I now repented 'that I had ſo raſhly divulged any part 'of this fatal ſecret; not but I ſhould 'have been glad to have ſeen my wicked 'tutor puniſhed; but I knew that, on 'the leaſt attempt made for my redreſs, 'he would infallibly expoſe the follies 'I had been guilty of in regard to him; 'and, when compared with the loſs of 'Amaſis, my fortune, or even my life 'itſelf, ſeemed a leſs terrible misfor-'tune: for this reaſon, therefore, I 'refuſed the entreaties of a beloved 'lover, and ſereened the villainy of a 'wretch whom my ſoul abhorred. In 'fine, I would reveal no more than I 'had done. Amaſis left me in a very 'ill humour; and the next morning I 'received a billet from him, containing 'theſe ſtabbing lines—

"TO MISS ALINDA *****.

"MADAM,

"I Have been conſidering on the "amazing account you gave me "laſt night; and as you refuſe to diſ-"cover either the perſon with whom "you made this engagement, or the "motives which induced you to it, can "look on it as no other than a contract "with ſome gentleman once happy in "your affections. A ſecond hand "paſſion neither ſuits with the delicacy "of my humour, nor to encroach upon "the rights of another with my ho-"nour: I ſhall therefore deſiſt, trou-"bling you with any future viſits, but "ſhall be always glad to hear of your "welfare, which I deſpair of doing "till you prevail upon yourſelf to be "juſt to your firſt vows. Sacrifice the

"affection

" affection you have for me to the
" obligations you are under to my
" rival. I yield to his prior title all the
" late glorious hopes I had conceived;
" and wish you more happy with him,
" than it is now in your power to make
" your humble servant,

" AMASIS."

'Here ended all my hopes of happi-
'ness; all the soft ideas of love and
'marriage vanished for ever from my
'breast, and were succeeded by others
'of the most dreadful nature. For se-
'veral weeks I abandoned myself to
'grief and to despair, but pride at length
'got the better of these passions; and,
'to conceal the real situation of my
'heart from the enquiring world, I all
'at once affected to be madly gay, and
'ran into such extravagancies, as,
'without being criminal in fact, justly
'drew upon me the severest censures.

'But nature will not bear a perpetual
'violence. Grief and despair were the
'strongest passions in me. In the midst
'of dancing, tears were ready to start
'from my eyes, and sighs from my bo-
'som, which, when I endeavoured to
'suppress, recoiled upon my heart, and
'shook my frame with the most terrible
'revulsions. The marriage of Amasis
'seconded the blow our parting had
'given: I could no longer dissemble
'what I felt, no longer appear the
'giddy, thoughtless libertine, but flew
'from one extreme to the other. I now
'would see no company, shut myself
'up in my chamber, denied access to
'my best friends, and never went
'abroad. I suffered not Le Bris to
'come into my presence; and, I believe,
'perceiving me so resolute, he would
'have accepted of a sum of money to
'have quitted my house entirely: but
'I had now done with the world, had
'lost in Amasis all I valued in it, and
'would not give the monster, whom I
'justly looked upon as the source of all
'my misfortunes, any more than I was
'compelled to do, his bare board and
'salary.

'Behold, by these memoirs, the be-
'ginning and progress of all my misfe-
'ries! The end is near at hand; Death
'is already busy at my heart, and
'allows no time to apologize for the
'errors of my conduct. Pity is all my
'ashes can expect!'

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINS A VERY BRIEF ACCOUNT OF SOME PASSAGES SUBSEQUENT TO THE FOREGOING STORY, WITH THE AUTHOR'S REMARKS UPON THE WHOLE.

AS I know very well that solidity has but a small share in the composition of the lady whom Alinda had intended to entrust with the publication of her memoirs, I thought the surest way of having the will of the deceased performed, was not to trouble a person of her character with the perusal of them, but to take the opportunity of my invisibility ship to present them to the world myself, which I accordingly have done.

And now, as I doubt not but the reader will be glad of being informed farther concerning Le Bris, I shall relate such particulars as have come to my knowledge.

It must be concluded, that this unworthy preceptor, in looking over the papers of Alinda, had either not observed, or afterwards forgot, that the ring he had just taken from among her other jewels, was the very same mentioned in her letter to her friend, otherwise he would certainly have had cunning enough to have replaced it where he found it.

Mr. *****, soon recollecting what his cousin had said to him in regard of this little legacy, and missing it from her other trinkets, made a strict enquiry what was become of it. Le Bris, having had her keys in his possession, was one of the first interrogated; and, on being so, boldly replied, that such a ring had been bestowed upon him by Alinda. 'How can that be,' cried the other; 'when, but three days be-
'fore her death, she bequeathed it to a
'lady of her acquaintance, and insisted
'on my promise of delivering it to her?'
—'She must then be delirious,' said the parson; 'but, however that might
'be, Heaven forbid I should detain
'what is even suspected to be the right
'of another!' and, with these words, presented the ring to Mr. *****, who received it from him without the least ceremony.

This affair, notwithstanding the hypocritical manner in which the ring was returned,

returned, gave Mr. ***** room to imagine there had been some foul play in relation to Alinda's effects. The steward proved by his books, that he had paid into her hands, a week before her death, two hundred and fifty pounds in specie, and more than twice that sum in Bank bills, being arrears he had received from the tenants. It seemed unlikely to them that she could have disposed of the money, much less have had any occasion to change the bills in so short a time; orders were therefore sent to the Bank to stop the payment of such numbers till further notice: but the precaution came too late; the person who had secreted them had been already there, and converted all his paper into cash.

The heir, however, was confident that he had been defrauded: he consulted council upon it, who all advised him to have recourse to equity. Whether Le Bris had any hint given him of what was intended to be done against him, or whether his own guilty conscience made him only apprehend it, is uncertain: but he had not courage to stand the test of examination; he fled the kingdom; after having thrown aside that robe which, had he been known for what he truly was, would long before have been stripped from his sacrilegious shoulders.

But Providence would not permit him to enjoy his ill-got spoils, nor a life he had devoted to such wicked purposes. Designing to turn trader at Jamaica, he embarked for that place; but the vessel being overtaken by a storm, was lost almost in sight of shore; and he, with many other, perhaps less guilty persons, perished in the wreck. This last piece of intelligence I received from his mother; whom, though he had supported during the life of Alinda, to prevent being exposed by her clamours, he now left pennyless, destitute, and starving, in an extreme old age.

Thus did the vengeance of Heaven at last overtake the wretch who, besides his other impieties, had been guilty of the most cruel ingratitude and breach of trust, in imposing upon the simplicity of a young creature committed to his care, and utterly destroying all the views of his generous patron and benefactor.

As for the unfortunate Alinda, though it is certain her conduct cannot be wholly justified, yet, according to my opinion, it ought not to be wholly condemned. It would be passing too severe a judgment, to impute the fondness she expressed for her wicked tutor to a wanton inclination. If we consider the various arts of her seducer, the commands laid on her by her father to love and obey him as himself, the manner in which she was brought up, the perfect ignorance she was kept in of the customs of the world, and how other young ladies behaved; we shall find that these are all of them very strong pleas in her defence, and not forbear pitying the mistakes of such artless innocence.

I wish as much could be alleged in her behalf on the score of her behaviour after breaking off with Amasis. The excesses into which she ran, in order to conceal the disquiets of her mind for the loss of that favourite lover, too evidently shew that she sacrificed two of the most valuable characteristicks of womanhood her prudence and her modesty, to one of the very worst—her pride.

Nor can I offer any thing in vindication of the last stages of her life. If convinced of her error in being perpetually amongst promiscuous company, it was flying to an almost as inexcusable extreme, to shut herself up from her best friends, and avoid the society of those whose conversation might have dissipated her chagrin, and, at the same time, improved her understanding. To do this, seems to me, I must confess, to have more the savour of despair, than of virtue or true fortitude.

There was, doubtless, a certain giddy propensity in her nature, which wanted to be corrected by reason, example, precept, authority, and the rudiments of a good education; all which she was denied: and it must therefore be acknowledged, that both her faults and misfortunes were entirely owing to the caprice and credulity of her father, and the base designs of the person appointed to be her governor and instructor.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR, BY THE HELP OF HIS INVISIBILITY, HAS DISCOVERED SUCH A CONTRAST IN THE BEHAVIOUR OF TWO MARRIED COUPLE OF DISTINCTION, AS HE THINKS WOULD BE THE UTMOST INJUSTICE TO THE PUBLICK TO CONCEAL.

PLACENTIA, after a long and paſſionate courtſhip, was at laſt wedded to Dalmatius. She brought him an ample fortune, a very agreeable perſon, and an unblemiſhed character. She had ſtudied the duties of a wife before ſhe became ſo, and afterwards practiſed them in the ſtricteſt manner. Whenever ſhe found him gay, ſhe heightened his good humour by her own ſprightlineſs; and when ſullen and perverſe, as was too often the caſe, ſhe endeavoured to diſſipate his chagrin, either by playing on her ſpinnet, or telling him ſome diverting ſtory. Without ſeeming to conſult his palate, ſhe always took care to put ſuch diſhes into her bill of fare as ſhe had perceived he fed upon with moſt ſatisfaction. Whatever company ſuited his taſte, were ſure to be often invited by her, and entertained with the greateſt marks of eſteem and complaiſance. Her whole thoughts, indeed, were taken up with obliging and making him happy: ſhe had no will, no inclination of her own; both were entirely regulated by his: and, to add to all this, ſhe was an excellent œconomiſt, underſtood the management of a family perfectly well, and knew how to make a grand appearance with leſs expence than ſome others are at who are a counted contemptibly parſimonious.

What would ſome huſbands give to be bleſſed with ſo virtuous, ſo tender, ſo endearing a companion! Dalmatius, inſtead of placing this jewel next his heart, hung it careleſsly upon his ſleeve; either not knowing, or not regarding, the true value of it.

During the courſe of ſeveral inviſible viſitations I made at their houſe, never did I ſee him treat her in any degree proportionable to her merit. When in his beſt humours, he returned the careſſes ſhe gave him only with a cold indifference; but when any thing abroad had happened to thwart his view, either of pleaſure or ambition, no man could behave with more churliſhneſs at home. But the manner in which this couple behaved to each other will beſt appear from their own words, which I ſhall give a ſhort ſpecimen of on two different occaſions.

They were to go out together one day, to call on ſome friends who were to accompany them on a party of plea-

ſure,

ſure. The landau waited at the door. He had juſt finiſhed dreſſing, and ſent up to know if his wife was ready. The meſſage could be ſcarce delivered before ſhe came flying into the room, on which the following dial gue enſued—

Placentia. I hope I have not made you wait for me?

Dalmatius. Not at all. It wants ſome minutes of our appointment; but I know you women are generally ſo long equipping yourſelves, that I was willing to haſten you.

Placentia. I ſhould know but li tle of the value of time, if I waſted much of it in dreſſing. But pray, my dear, how do you like me to-day?

Dalmatius. Like you! that's an odd queſtion. Why, as well as ever I did.

Placentia. I ſhould be miſerable it I did not think you did. But I mean, how do you like my cloaths? you ſee I am all in new.

Dalmatius. Are you indeed? I ſhould have ſeen nothing of it, if you had not told me: I never mind what women have on.

Placentia. Then I am diſappointed, my dear; for I aſſure you I conſulted your fancy more than my own in the choice I made of this ſilk; as I have heard you ſay an hundred times, I believe, that you thought blue and ſilver the moſt agreeable mixture that could be.

Dalmatius. So it is; but it may not happen to become every body: however, I muſt do you the juſtice to ſay, you look well enough in it, and I believe every body will think ſo.

Placentia. If you think ſo, my dear, it is all I wiſh.

In ſpeaking this, ſhe took hold of his hand, and kiſſed it with the greateſt warmth of affection. He returned the favour with a ſlight ſalute upon her cheek; then looking on his watch, ſaid he believed it was time to go, and went down ſtairs, ſhe following.

The truth of the affair is this. Dalmatius is not only vain and inſolent in his nature, but alſo amorous and inconſtant to an exceſs. Tho gh he no longer had any eyes for the charms of his fair wife, his heart was but too ſuſceptible to thoſe of other women. Miranda for ſome time engroſſed all his devoirs; nor could her being married to the moſt intimate of his friends reſtrain him from making his unlawful addreſſes to her; nor the vow ſhe had taken at the altar, deter her from gratifying an inclination he had found the way to inſpire.

The huſband of this lady is a man of ſo much indolence, and ſo l ttle delicacy, that he never g ves himſelf the leaſt concern about what pleaſures his wife may indulge herſelf in, provided ſhe offers no interrupti n to thoſe he takes himſelf. There are ſome, indeed, who ſay, that on their marriage they mutually agreed to allow each other a perfect latitude in this point; but, be that as it may, Miranda ſeems under no apprehenſions of her conduct being cal ed in queſtion by him.

Her amour with Dalmatius ſoon became ſo notorious, that it was in the mouth of every one. Placentia herſelf was the laſt that gave credit t it; that excell nt lady would not ſuffer her he rt to entertain ill thoughts of the man ſhe was bo nd to love, nor could any thing but the teſtimony of her own eyes have convinced her of the guilty truth.

Miranda came to vi t her one day when ſhe happened to be abroad; but Dalmatius being at home, the preſence of his wife was li tle wanted. She ſoon returned, however; and being told that Miranda was above, ran haſtily up to receive her; but not finding her in the room where company were uſually introduced, yet thinking ſhe heard the murmur of voices very near, ſhe ſtepped towards the place whence it ſeemed to proceed, and peeping through the key-hole of an adjacent chamber, ſaw her huſband and the lady in a poſture ſuch as could leave her no doubt of their criminal converſation.

The ſudden ſhock at firſt transfixed her feet; but preſently recovering herſelf, ſhe retired from the guilty ſcene, and went into her own chamber; where finding her woman at work, ſhe ordered her to go immediately down, and forbid the ſervants to take any notice of her being come home. 'I hear,' ſaid ſhe, 'that Miranda is below, and I am 'not very well, and would not ſee any 'company at this time.'

The woman being withdrawn, to do as ſhe was commanded, Placentia threw herſelf into an eaſy chair, and fell into a profound reverie. I was preſent all this while, but my Belt of Inviſibility did not enable me to penetrate into her thoughts; till ſeeming as if determined on ſomething ſhe had been debating within

within herſelf, ſhe roſe ſuddenly from her ſeat, and burſt into theſe words—'No, 'he ſhall never know I think him falſe, 'much leſs that I have detected him. 'Reproaches would avail me nothing, 'and might harden him in his crime. 'I am his wife; we muſt always live 'together, or be ſubject to the ridicule 'of a laughing and cenſorious world. 'Prudence, therefore, as well as duty, 'commands me to conceal the ſhameful 'diſcovery I have made; and rather en-'deavour, by added tenderneſs, if poſ-'ſible, to reclaim him, and oblige him 'to ſee I am at leaſt as worthy of his af-'fection as Miranda.'

I left her in this reſolution, and found that for ſeveral days ſhe ſtrictly adhered to it; excepting only, that ſhe could not ſo far diſſemble her uneaſineſs as to be able to receive Miranda in the manner ſhe had formerly done: ſhe therefore deſiſted from making her any farther invitations to her houſe, and always excuſed herſelf from accepting any ſent to her by that lady.

This was enough, however, to give the lovers ſome apprehenſions that ſhe ſuſpected their intrigue; but Miranda was of too vain and gay a temper to feel any inquietude on this ſcore; and the ungrateful Dalmatius, finding himſelf treated by his wife with the ſame love and complaiſance as ever, gave himſelf not the trouble either to examine, or be under the leaſt concern, whether ſuch a behaviour proceeded from her ignorance of his fault, or her diſcretion in overlooking it.

But the ſweeteſt diſpoſition may be embittered by continual provocations. Placentia, finding that all the efforts ſhe made for regaining the affections of her huſband were ineffectual, began by degrees to grow more remiſs in her cares of pleaſing; not that ſhe ever departed from the eſſential duties of a wife, ſhe only ceaſed the practice of thoſe which, as the caſe ſtood between them, might juſtly be called works of ſupererogation.

Being to have a great route at her houſe, juſt as ſhe was going to ſend cards to invite the company, Dalmatius came into the room; and having looked over the catalogue of names, on finding Miranda's not there, began with an unuſual haughtineſs to interrogate her on that occaſion; and ſhe now, for the firſt time, replied to what he ſaid with as much indifference as ſhe had formerly done with ſubmiſſion.

Dalmatius. How happens it, Madam, that Miranda is left out among the number of your gueſts?

Placentia. I had forgot her.

Dalmatius. It is well, then, that I reminded you: but methinks a lady of her rank and character in the world might well have deſerved a place in your remembrance.

Placentia. It may be ſo; but one cannot invite every body.

Dalmatius. When any body is invited to our houſe, eſpecially on theſe occaſions, it would be the utmoſt abſurdity to leave Miranda out; therefore I inſiſt upon her coming, for your own ſake.

Placentia. Oh, Sir, you need not give yourſelf any trouble on that ſcore; I am certainly a judge how to behave to my own acquaintance: but if you are ſo deſirous of having Miranda here to-morrow, the beſt way is for you to ſend a card as from yourſelf; I doubt not but the invitation will be full as agreeable, and as readily complied with.

Dalmatius. You talk in an odd manner, Madam! And, now I think on it, I met Miranda the other day in the Park, and ſhe complained to me of a ſtrange change in you towards her; that you have never returned the laſt viſit ſhe made you; have ſcarce ſpoke to her in any publick aſſembly, and ſeemed to ſhun her preſence as much as poſſible. Pray what is the meaning of all this?

Placentia. That, Sir, is a queſtion which perhaps neither you nor ſhe would thank me for anſwering directly.

Dalmatius. I underſtand you, Madam, however. You have got notions in your head not becoming in you to indulge, nor worthy any endeavours of mine to expel. I would only have you be wiſer; and conſider, that of all domeſtick animals a jealous wife is the moſt contemptible.

He flung out of the room with theſe words, and all the tokens of diſdain and indignation in his countenance; leaving Placentia in a confuſion not eaſy to be deſcribed. I could perceive, however, by the geſtures of that unhappy lady, that ſhe repented having gone ſo far; yet knowing herſelf the only injured, could not yield either to recede from her reſolution on the account of Miranda, or make uſe of any attempts to ſoften

so ill-founded a resentment in her husband.

It is now said that his amour with Miranda is on the decline; that a new face has utterly eclipsed all the charms he lately found in hers; and that Placentia has at least this consolation under her misfortune, to find that no one beauty has the power long to retain the heart she has lost: so just are the poet's words—

'When fix'd to one, love safe at anchor rides,
'And dares the fury of the winds and tides;
'But losing once that hold, to the wide ocean borne,
'It drives at will, to ev'ry wave a scorn.'

Marriage, though a sacred institution, though ordained by Heaven to bestow the supremest felicity we mortals are capable of enjoying, becomes the severest curse, when souls ill suited to each other are joined in it's indissoluble bonds; and it too often happens, that those who by nature and education are qualified to give and receive the greatest happiness, are rendered the most miserable, through the perverseness of a bad-tempered partner.

Montelion has been twice married. He has experienced both all the contentments, and all the inquietudes, of that state, with women of humours as widely different as light and darkness; I had almost said, as heaven from hell. His first lady, as she was excelled by none in exterior perfections, so she was equalled but by very few in the more valuable endowments of the mind. His life, while in possession of this treasure, was one continued scene of harmony and love. But soon, alas! the blissful prospect vanished; the fair, the virtuous, the tender Erminia, died! and, to add to the misfortune of her disconsolate husband, left no pledge behind her of their mutual affection.

Though in that season of life when amorous flames are at their highest bent, those of Montelion seemed all buried in the grave of his dear Erminia. He remained for several years the lonely occupier of a widowed bed. At last, however, the ardent desire of having an heir for his estate got somewhat the better of his melancholy, and determined him on a second venture.

In the choice he made, he consulted neither fortune nor beauty: the one, indeed, he wanted not; and as for the other, since his Erminia's death all women were equal to him, and he regarded the lovely and unlovely with the same indifference. He therefore married Ferocia, merely because she was one of the daughters of a fruitful family, and likely to answer the only end which induced him once more to become a husband.

Every body was astonished at these nuptials, and much more so on the knowledge of Ferocia's behaviour afterwards. But I shall present my reader with the character of this lady, as it was given by an impartial hand in a letter to a friend.

'Ferocia, now the wife of Montelion, 'is a woman plain in her person, weak 'in her understanding, capricious and 'fantastick in her humour, unpolished 'in her manners; and, what is worse 'than all, insufferably vain and insolent on her new dignity, without one 'grain of true love or gratitude for the 'man who has raised her to it.'

My gift of invisibility assisted me in proving the truth of the above in all it's parts. Farther I will not pretend to say; for though it is a vulgar adage, that 'Where there is no modesty there 'is little sign of honesty,' and I have heard severe censures passed upon her virtue, yet I never could make any discoveries to her prejudice on that score; and am apt to believe, that the rampant airs she gives herself among the men, are in reality, more owing to a boldenly than an amorous disposition.

Montelion seems to see her behaviour in the same light I do; yet, for the sake of his own honour, cannot but wish she would act with more reserve. They had not been married above three months, when he was seized with a fit of the gout, which confined him to his apartment. Ferocia came in, covered over with jewels, and blazing like a star; and, without expressing any concern for his indisposition, told him that she was going to Lady Primwell's route; on which ensued the following dialogue between them—

Montelion. I flattered myself, Madam, with having the happiness of your company at home this evening, as I am not in a condition to stir out.

Ferocia. Oh heavens! I should make the

the worſt nurſe in the world! What good would my ſtaying do you?

Montelion. A great deal, Madam; and I hope I need ſay no more to engage you not to leave me.

Ferocia. Indeed, my lord, I muſt go; I have given my promiſe.

Montelion. You will be eaſily excuſed. Nobody will expect a wife on a party of pleaſure, when they know her huſband is confined by pain. Come, my dear, you muſt not think that ſtaying at home one night is an act of too much complaiſance to a man who would refuſe nothing for your ſatisfaction.

In ſpeaking this, he drew her gently towards him, and gave her two or three very tender kiſſes; but, in doing ſo, a little ſnuff he had between his thumb and finger happened to ſcatter on her glove; on which ſhe ſtarted from him, and returned his kind expreſſions in theſe terms—

Ferocia. Piſh! How ſilly this is! You have ſpoiled my gloves with your naſty ſnuff. Here, John! William! run one of you to my dreſſing-room, and bid Faddle bring me a pair of gloves in a minute.

Montelion. Don't put yourſelf into a paſſion, my dear; but ſit down, and reſolve to oblige me. I'll call for cards, and we'll have a game at picquet.

She made no reply; but hung down her head, and ſtood counting the ſticks of her fan till Faddle came into the room.

Ferocia. Where are the gloves?

Faddle. Madam, I thought the fellow was miſtaken, when he bid me bring gloves; as your ladyſhip had juſt now a clean pair.

Montelion. Aye, Mrs. Faddle, there is no occaſion. Rather get your lady's night-dreſs ready; for ſhe has changed her mind, and does not go abroad.

Ferocia. Indeed I both muſt and will, my lord. Do you imagine, that becauſe you are ſick, I muſt mortify myſelf, and be mewed up with you till I am ſick too? No, no; I am not weak enough to comply with ſo unreaſonable a requeſt; therefore adieu. I ſhall ſeldom ſee you till late; and hope then to find your lordſhip better.

She waited not for any reply he might have made, but flounce! out of the room, followed by her woman. Montelion ſoon after heard the footman called to attend her ladyſhip, and the chariot drive from the door. How would ſome huſbands have reſented ſuch uſage! yet Montelion bore it, without any ſhew of impatience, from one endowed with no charms to excite either love or reſpect. His tameneſs, however, is not owing to any meanneſs of ſpirit in him, but rather to his good ſenſe. He does not care to have his domeſtick affairs become the talk of the town, nor to come to an open rupture with the woman he has made his wife; and having in vain eſſayed all the means that prudence and good-nature could ſuggeſt to bring her to a more reaſonable way of thinking, he has at laſt given over the attempt; ſeems not to regard whatever ſhe does, but endeavours to loſe the thoughts of his private diſquiets in the toils of publick buſineſs.

CHAP. II.

RELATES A STRANGE INSTANCE OF BIGOTRY AND ENTHUSIASM IN A PARENT.

NOTHING is ſo deſirable as religion, nothing ſo truly amiable as piety. What bleſſings does it not diffuſe to all who are within the reach of it's influence? From it all other virtues are derived, and by it alone we are enabled to act with vigour. Yet how often have we ſeen this heavenly quality perverted into it's very oppoſite; and, from the ſpirit of meekneſs, benevolence, mercy, charity, and univerſal love, become the ſpirit of pride, contention, envy, hatred, and perſecution! Like the archangel, who ſtanding neareſt to the throne of glory, precipitated himſelf into the loweſt hell.

Bigotry and ſuperſtition are the ſureſt engines which the ſubtle enemy of mankind makes uſe of for our deſtruction. All other crimes carry their ſtings with them; conſcience reproaches us for doing amiſs, and we fall not again into the like without extreme remorſe and ſhame: but the man poſſeſſed of this holy frenzy of the mind glories in his perſeverance, becauſe he looks upon it as the higheſt virtue.

A gentleman, whom I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Flaminio, had attained to the age of fifty, without having been known to be guilty of any one

thing which could call in queſtion either his honour, good-nature, or good ſenſe. He had lived careſſed by his friends, reſpected by his acquaintance, and almoſt adored by his tenants and dependants. He had one ſon, and one daughter; and having loſt his wife in bringing the latter into the world, he never ventured on a ſecond, but laid out all his cares on the education of theſe two.

Adario, for ſo I ſhall call the ſon, having finiſhed his ſtudies to the ſatisfaction of all thoſe who had the charge of inſtructing him, in order to compleat the fine gentleman, was ſent to make the tour of Europe, under the care of a diſcreet and experienced governor. Iſabinda, the daughter, remained at home with her father; and being extremely beautiful, and miſtreſs of every accompliſhment befitting her ſex and rank, attracted the love and admiration of as many as had opportunity to be witneſs of her perfections.

Being ſuch as I have deſcribed it may eaſily be ſuppoſed that, in a town like this, there were not few who declared themſelves her lovers. Lyſimor was among the number of thoſe who had the leaſt to fear, and the moſt to hope for, in his addreſſes to her. He had an agreeable perſon, was deſcended of a good family, and was heir to an eſtate adequate to his birth. He had been fellow-ſtudent with Adario; and though, being ſome years older, he had left the univerſity before him, they had always kept up a correſpondence. He was introduced to the acquaintance of the ſiſter by the intimacy he had with the brother; who failed not, before he went abroad, to recommend his friend's pretenſions to her in the ſtrongeſt terms.

He it was, indeed, who alone had the power of pleaſing her. Her young heart preſently diſtinguiſhed him from all his rivals; but her modeſty and diſcretion would not permit her to give him any marks of a peculiar regard, till authorized to do ſo by the perſon ſhe had always been taught to conſider as the ſole diſpoſer of her fate.

Lyſimor, who had alſo been bred in the moſt ſtrict obedience, made not his court to Iſabinda without having firſt communicated the paſſion he had for her to his father, and received his approbation. The two old gentlemen had afterwards an interview on this occaſion; and Flaminio, being perfectly ſatisfied with the propoſals made by the other, readily gave his conſent, on condition his daughter, whoſe inclinations he ſaid he would never go about to force, ſhould have no objection to the match.

The ſame evening, as they were ſitting together at ſupper, Flaminio related to his daughter all that had paſſed between him and the father of Lyſimor; and added, that he looked upon him as a very deſerving young fellow; that his birth and fortune were unexceptionable; and that, if ſhe had no averſion to his perſon, he ſhould be heartily glad of an alliance with him.

Iſabinda bluſhed like the ſun juſt peeping from a cloud, on hearing her father ſpeak in this manner; and could ſcarce recover herſelf from the glad ſurprize enough to tell him that, ſince he was pleaſed with ſuch a union, ſhe ſhould be all obedience to his will. She ſaid no more; but the ſoft confuſion ſhe was in, and the joy which ſhe could not reſtrain from ſparkling in her eyes, ſufficiently teſtified how much her inclinations correſponded with her duty. 'Well, 'then,' reſumed he, 'from this time 'forward receive Lyſimor as the perſon 'by Heaven and me ordained to be 'your huſband.'

I leave it to my fair readers to conceive what delightful images muſt fill the mind of Iſabinda, after this ſanction to an affection which hitherto ſhe had not dared to indulge, yet had it not in her power to ſubdue. For my own part, though I was preſent during all the converſation ſhe had with her father on this head, I left the houſe when ſhe retired to her chamber; which ſhe did more early than ordinary that night, I gueſs, to have an opportunity of giving a looſe to the tranſports of her mind.

As for Lyſimor, the joy he felt on being acquainted with what his father had done for him, was very much allayed by the perfect ignorance he was in of having made any impreſſion on the heart of his charming miſtreſs. He went to viſit her the next day, hoping, yet trembling, for the event: but ſoon the lovely maid put an end to his ſuſpence, by aſſuring him, that for his ſake alone ſhe could reſolve, without reluctance, on changing her condition.

Not only the lovers themſelves, but both their parents alſo, ſeemed equally impatient for the conſummation of theſe nuptials. A ſhort day was appointed for

for the celebration; the articles of settlement and jointure were drawing up; new habits, new coaches, new equipages, all necessary preparations were carrying on with the utmost expedition: when, lo! a sudden and unexpected storm bore down at once the pleasing prospect of their hopes; for ever dashed their expected joys, and spread a lasting scene of desolation and despair! How vainly, alas! do we depend on mortal happiness! The gaudy bubble fleets before us like the wind, eludes our grasp, and mocks the idle chace, as Sir Robert Howard justly expresses it—

' Short is th' uncertain reign and pomp of
' mortal pride.
' New turns and changes ev'ry day
' Are of inconstant Chance the constant
' arts.
' Soon she gives, soon takes away:
' She comes, embraces, nauseates you, and
' parts,'

Flaminio, from being the most chearful, good-natured man, that could be of his age, became all at once transformed into the most sullen, gloomy, and discontented. From expressing the utmost eagerness for his daughter's wedding, he now appeared wholly negligent of every thing relating to it. When the father of Lysimor, and the lawyer employed to draw the marriage-writings, went to his house, he ordered his servants to say he was from home; made several tradesmen carry back the things he had bespoke for the solemnity; and, in fine, put an entire stop to all he had been so solicitous in forwarding.

The father of Lysimor began to think himself affronted by this proceeding, and both the lovers were amazed and troubled beyond description at it: but though the young gentleman came once or twice every day to visit his dear mistress, Flaminio so carefully avoided his presence, that he could get no opportunity of complaining to him; and Isabinda was too much terrified by the unusual austerity of his looks, to have the courage to open her lips to him on this score.

She was one afternoon alone in the fore-parlour, waiting the approach of Lysimor; when her father, who was in a back room, called her to him. She immediately obeyed; and, on her entrance, was accosted by him in this manner—

Flaminio. Well, Isabinda, I suppose you expect Lysimor here presently?

Isabinda. Yes, Sir. It is near the hour when he generally visits me.

Flaminio. His company may be spared at this time. I have something to say to you, and would not be interrupted. I have therefore given orders to the servants to tell him, when he comes, that you are gone abroad.

Isabinda. He will scarce believe that, because I promised to take a walk with him in the Mall after tea; but if you require my attendance, I will dismiss him the moment he comes.

Flaminio. No, it shall be as I have said. If you marry him, you will have opportunities enough to see each other; and if you do not, it will be best for you not to have settled your affections upon him.

Isabinda. Sir, I should never have entertained the least thoughts of marrying either him or any other man, without having first received your commands to do so.

Flaminio. However that may be, events we think most near are often the farthest from being accomplished; and, for that reason, a young maid ought never to dispose of her heart till it is accompanied by her hand.

Isabinda. I hope, Sir, that Lysimor has done nothing to forfeit the goodwill you once had for him.

Flaminio. No, no; I have nothing to say against the young gentleman: and should still approve of him for a son-in-law, but——

Isabinda. But what! I beseech you, Sir, keep me not on a rack more cruel than death!

Flaminio. I am sorry to see you so much concerned on his account; I hoped to have found you more indifferent: but, since your inclinations are so deeply engaged, wish from my soul there was a possibility for your union.

Isabinda. Ah, Sir, what prevents it!

Flaminio. A father's everlasting happiness or misery.

These words, the emphasis with which he uttered them, and the horror that appeared in his countenance, frighted the poor young lady almost into fits. She started trembled; and, not able to comprehend the meaning of what she heard,

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the moſt terrible ideas came into her mind; which made her rather dread than wiſh an explanation.

She ſtood pale as a ghoſt, and motionleſs a a ſtatue; while her father, greatly agitated, walked backwards and forwards in the room with irregular and diſordered ſteps. Both remained ſpeechleſs for ſome time. At laſt—'I cannot as yet,' ſaid he, 'bring myſelf to 'relieve the ſuſpence I ſee you in; but 'will do it ſoon. Retire, therefore, my 'dear Iſabinda, to your chamber,' continued he, with a deep ſigh; 'and 'invoke the Almighty Diſpenſer of 'bleſſings to give you that compoſure 'of mind, which can alone enable you 'to ſupport chearfully whatever fate 'he is pleaſed to ordain for you.'

She went to her chamber, as commanded; but whether to pray or weep, I will not pretend to inform my readers. I remained with Flaminio while he ſtaid below, which was not long; then followed him up to his cloſet, where he ſhut himſelf in, plucking the door ſo haſtily after him, I had not time to enter; but peeping through the key hole, I ſaw he had thrown himſelf proſtrate on the floor, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, ſeeming very earneſt in devotion. I left him in this poſture, and returned home, much ſurprized at what I had ſeen and heard.

Impatient, however, to get ſome farther light into an affair which at preſent appeared ſo myſterious to me, I went the next morning to Flaminio's houſe. I entered Iſabinda's chamber with a ſervant who was carrying in a diſh of chocolate. That unhappy lady was ſitting leaning her elbow on a table, and her head upon her hand; her eyes red with the late-fallen tears, and all ſymptoms of deſpair and grief about her. But nothing being to be learnt here, I went in ſearch of Flaminio, whom I found in his dreſſing-room. He was in a muſing poſture, but had a countenance much more ſerene than the day before. I had not been many minutes with him, before he rung his bell for a footman, whom he ordered to fetch Iſabinda to him. She preſently came; and I was witneſs of the following extraordinary dialogue—

Flaminio. Sit down, my child. I was to blame to leave you in the perplexity I did laſt night, but it was occaſioned only by my too great tenderneſs. I could not eaſily reſolve to tell you a thing which I feared would make you wiſh I had loved you leſs.

Iſabinda. Sir, I have always looked upon your paternal affection to me as the greateſt bleſſing of my life.

Flaminio. I believe you have; and I had never any cauſe to think you did not return that affection with an adequate proportion of filial love and duty.

Iſabinda. I flatter myſelf, Sir, that no one of my actions has ever ſhewn the contrary.

Flaminio. None, indeed, my deareſt child. I ought not, therefore, to have doubted of your ready compliance in a thing on which my ſoul's eternal peace depends. Tell me, my Iſabinda, would you not willingly forego a trifling ſatisfaction to enſure your father's happineſs both here and hereafter?

Iſabinda. I ſhould elſe, Sir, be unworthy of the goodneſs you have ſhewn me.

Flaminio. Well, then, my deareſt Iſabinda, I will no longer heſitate to make thee the confidante of a ſecret which hitherto has never eſcaped my own boſom. It is a ſtory will very much ſurprize thee: but ſee thou mark me well, and be attentive to every particular.

Iſabinda. You may be certain, Sir, I will be ſo.

Flaminio. Know, then, that going into the country to take poſſeſſion of that eſtate which you have heard devolved on me by the death of my uncle, I fell into the acquaintance of a young lady in the neighbourhood, called Harriot. She was handſome. I had a heart entirely free; and I became, as I then thought, violently in love with her. But marriage being a thing of too ſerious a nature to be agreeable to my inclinations at that time, the addreſſes I made to her were extremely private. Such as they were, however, they ſucceeded but too well; and, on my promiſing to make her my wife, obtained all the gratification my paſſion could require.

Having finiſhed the buſineſs which had brought me thither, I ſet out ſoon after on my return to London. Harriot took leave of me without much regret; being to follow in a few days with her father and the whole family, the winter ſeaſon coming on. On her arrival, ſhe ſent me immediate notice; and I provided a proper

proper place for our private interviews, which were not seldom, my amorous desires being yet unsatiated.

Perhaps her youth, beauty, and the extreme tenderness she had for me, might have engaged me for a much longer time, had not the charms of your dear mother rendered all those of the whole sex besides contemptible in my eyes. I adored her from the first moment I beheld her. The flame she inspired me with was widely different from what I had ever felt before: marriage was no more a bugbear to me; on the contrary, I languished to be linked in those bonds with a person of such distinguished merit, and the means of attaining that felicity engrossed all my thoughts.

I now made a thousand excuses to avoid meeting poor Harriot; and when her repeated solicitations drew me sometimes to her, my behaviour was so cool, so changed from what it was, that she could not but see into the cause; she grew jealous, inquisitive, and soon discovered my honourable attachment.

Tears, reproaches, and complaints, now furnished me with a pretence to quarrel. I told her I would see her no more: and indeed she put it out of my power to break my word; for in three days after we had parted in this manner, she died; not without some suspicion of poison, as I have heard it whispered: but whether she had recourse, in reality, to any such desperate method to rid her of a life she was grown weary of, or whether grief alone did the work of fate, I know not; but am too certain, however that might be, my ingratitude was the cruel cause, though she was too generous ever to declare it; and not one of all her numerous kindred or acquaintance had the least intimation of the intercourse between us.

The shock I felt on the first intelligence of this sad catastrophe is inconceivable, and would doubtless have made a lasting impression on me, if the progress I every day made in my courtship to the object of my virtuous affection, the gaining her consent to be mine, our marriage, and the hurry of pleasures attending that solemnity, had not too much taken up my heart to leave room for any other sensations than those of joy and transport.

Events once obliterated from the mind by others of greater consequence to our happiness, seldom or never recur to it again. A long succession of years passed over without any remembrance of the unfortunate Harriot; and it is but very lately that the thoughts of her have begun to trouble my repose.

But Heaven would not suffer me to be always dead to a just sensibility of the crime I had been guilty of. Not many nights ago—whether sleeping or awake I cannot pretend to be positive—I saw, at least I thought I saw, that injured woman stand by my bed-side: I heard her, too, with a voice hollow, yet sonorous as an echo, bid me repent, and atone for my past transgression. 'How 'shall I atone?' cried I. 'Devote to 'Heaven the dearest thing you have on 'earth,' replied the phantom, and in that instant vanished from my sight.

It is not possible for me to express, much less for you to conceive, the horrors I suffered after this amazing dream or apparition, I know not which to call it: but am since convinced it was no other than my guardian angel, who, under the form of Harriot, instructed me how to atone for my crime; and should I neglect or disobey his admonition, it would more than double my transgression, and sink my soul down to the lowest hell. 'Devote to Heaven the dearest 'thing thou hast on earth,' the vision said. Now what have I on earth that is truly dear to me except your brother and yourself? I have examined well my heart, and find that of the two you sit nearest there: it is you, therefore, my Isabinda, that is ordained to be the sacrifice; and, like faithful Abraham, I must submit to lay my darling on the altar.

Isabinda. Oh, Sir, you will not kill me!

Flaminio. Kill thee, my child! rather would I suffer this flesh of mine to be torn with burning pincers, every limb dislocated, my breast laid open, and my panting heart exposed to publick view, than hurt the smallest part of thy dear precious frame! No, I mean to present thee a living sacrifice on the altar of piety; to consecrate thee to the service of Heaven; and to make thee, while on earth, a companion for the saints above. In fine, my Isabinda, you must be a nun.

Isabinda. A nun! Oh heavens!

This poor young lady seemed no less terrified with the word Nun than she had been with that of Sacrifice: but all I can say is, not all the obedience Isabinda had hitherto been practised in, nor

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all her father's authority, nor the arguments he urged, could either reconcile her to the way of life he enjoined, or oblige her to submit to it with any degree of willingness; and her tears and entreaties being equally in vain to make him recede from the resolution he had taken, he dismissed her from his presence; telling her, in a very angry tone, that he had now done with persuasions, and should take measures to bring her to her duty more becoming his character as a father.

CHAP. III.

THE AUTHOR FINDS HIMSELF, THOUGH WITH AN INFINITE DEAL OF DIFFICULTY OBLIGED TO MAKE A DISCOVERY OF SOME PART OF THE UNHAPPY CONSEQUENCES WHICH IMMEDIATELY ATTENDED THE CRUEL RESOLUTION FLAMINIO HAD TAKEN IN REGARD TO HIS DAUGHTER.

I Had never yet attempted to see how Lysimor brooked the late delays that had been given to his intended nuptials, so now took it into my head to go. A servant, who was carrying out a wig-box, gave me an opportunity of slipping into the house. I found the old gentleman with a letter in his hand, which seemed to excite in him very great emotions; but as he had just finished the perusal as I entered the room, and was putting it into his pocket, I could not possibly know any thing of the contents. I was not, however, long unsatisfied. Lysimor was returned from a morning walk he had been taking, and entered a few moments after. He appeared in little better humour than his father; and, when he had paid the usual salutation, spoke in this manner—

Lysimor. Certainly, Sir, something very extraordinary must have happened to occasion this sudden change both in Flaminio and his daughter. I have been to enquire of her health this morning, after being disappointed of seeing her last night, and have a second time been denied access.

Father. I could have told you that, if I had known you had been there. I have just received a letter from Flaminio. See what the old coxcomb writes.

With these words he drew the letter he had been reading from his pocket, and threw it on a table. Lysimor snatched it up with the greatest eagerness, and found the contents as follow—

'SIR,

'AN over-ruling fate deprives me of 'the honour of your alliance, 'and disposes of my daughter in a dif-'ferent manner from what I once in-'tended. I must therefore intreat your 'son will make no future visits at my 'house, nor take any steps to traverse 'those designs which I am obliged to 'pursue in relation to Isabinda. As 'for yourself, Sir, I hope you'll impute 'this alteration in my conduct to what 'it really is, an unavoidable necessity; 'and not to want of respect in him, who 'in all things else would readily sub-'scribe himself, Sir, your most obedient 'servant,

'FLAMINIO.'

Surprize and resentment now seemed to strive which should be most predominant in the countenance of Lysimor. He stamped, bit his lips, paused a while, then spoke.

Lysimor. This must be madness. No man in his senses could possibly act thus. What! after expressing the highest satisfaction in the intended union between our families, after the warmest professions of respect to you, Sir, and of love to me, to affront both in so gross a manner, without the least cause given on our part; 'tis unaccountable, 'tis monstrous! But I cannot think Isabinda shares in her father's phrenzy.

Father. Whatever she does, it behoves you not to think of her at all. Sooner would I have my family extinct, and my name perish to eternity, than have a branch of that stem grafted on a tree of mine; and I should be sorry to find you mean-spirited enough to retain a wish that way.

What reply Lysimor would have made I know not, for the old gentleman was called hastily out of the parlour to one who waited for him in another room. Lysimor, when alone, fell into a deep musing, in which he sighed and frowned alternately, and seemed divided between love and resentment. But whatever his thoughts were, he had no opportunity of indulging them. A servant presented him with a letter, which he said was brought

brought by a porter, who desired it might be given into his own hands, and waited for an answer. Lysimor no sooner saw the characters on the superscription, than the late paleness in his cheeks was converted into the most lively red. He broke the seal with trembling impatience, and found it contained these lines—

'DEAR SIR,

'MY father, in an unaccountable caprice, tears me from your arms, 'and is resolute to make me a nun, or 'rather a martyr of me. Prayers and 'tears are ineffectual to move him from 'his purpose; I have tried both in vain; 'and it is by flight alone I can avoid a 'fate more dreadful to me than all I 'can suffer by abandoning his protection. If you have compassion, I must 'not now say love, assist me in my 'escape. I have made no intimacies, 'have no confidents on whom I dare 'rely in this distracting exigence, and 'there remain not four and twenty hours 'between me and the impossibility of 'averting the doom that threatens me. 'I am at present a close prisoner in my 'chamber; and to morrow, early in the 'morning, am to take coach for Dover, thence to embark for Dunkirk, 'under the care of a person whose vigilance I cannot hope to elude, and 'who is not to quit my sight one 'moment, till I am, beyond redemption, lodged within the walls of a convent. A girl lately taken into the 'house, pitying my distress, has promised to get this conveyed to you, and 'also to grease the hinges of the street-door, that I may go out with less 'noise when the family are all in bed, 'which I believe will be pretty early, as 'my father is too much out of humour 'to see any company. If you will take 'upon you the trouble to wait for me 'at the end of our street, next the 'square, between the hours of twelve 'and one, and conduct me to some place 'where I may be secreted till the search 'which doubtless will be made after me 'is over, I shall endeavour to earn a 'subsistence by such ways as I am capable of, and fortune shall present. 'If you ever truly loved me, you will 'not think this request too presuming, 'but rather be sorry for the sad accident that compels me to make it. I 'beg a line, in answer to this, may inform me what I have to depend upon 'from your good nature, and what 'hope remains for the forlorn and most 'wretched

'ISABINDA.'

The lover appeared extremely touched with this melancholy epistle; and when he had finished, threw his arms across his breast, and cried out—'Poor Isabinda! What dæmon has taken pos'session of her father's brain!—But I 'should be even yet more cruel to refuse 'the assistance she implores. No, love, 'honour, and generosity, forbid it! 'Whatever shall be the consequence, I 'must, I will defend her from the fate 'she dreads.' He then called his footman, and bid him order the person who brought this letter to wait for an answer at some distance from the house, lest his father should happen to see him, and be inquisitive from whom, and on what business he came. Having given these instructions, he ran hastily into his chamber, where I followed, and saw him sit down to his bureau, and write in these terms—

'TO ISABINDA.

'MY FOR EVER DEAR ISABINDA,

'WHATEVER are my sufferings 'in this unexpected turn of our 'affairs, I cannot be wholly unhappy 'while I know you have had no part in 'the inflicting them. Why do you unkindly make that a request, which you 'ought to be convinced you might 'command from my affection? I have 'devoted myself entirely to your service; and no change of circumstances can ever make me withdraw a 'heart attracted by so much beauty, and confirmed in it's choice by so much 'merit. Yes, my charming Isabinda, 'I am unalterably yours; and you may 'depend upon my love and honour for 'every thing you either do, or shall 'hereafter stand in need of. I shall 'employ this day in procuring a proper 'place for your reception; and shall anticipate the hours you mention to 'watch for your enlargement, which I 'pray Heaven to facilitate, and bring 'you safe to the arms of, my dear Isabinda, your faithful and most constant

'LYSIMOR.'

He had but juſt diſpatched this, when his father came into the room; and, with a voice and air vaſtly different from what he had a few minutes before aſſumed, ſpoke to him in theſe terms—

Father. I believe, ſon, I have interrupted your dreſſing: but no matter; I bring you news to conſole you for the loſs of your late miſtreſs. My old friend, Mr. Countwell, the banker, has been with me. His fair charge, Emilia, comes to town next week; and he has offered, for a ſmall premium, to make up a match between you. He aſſures me ſhe is a m ſt lovely young creature, is entirely independent of any one, and has twenty thouſand pounds in her pocket, which is more than double the fortune you would have had with the daughter of that fool Flaminio.

Lyſimor. I am greatly indebted to your goodneſs, Sir, and to the conſideration Mr. Countwell has of me; but, Sir, you know I have long loved Iſabinda, and you muſt give my heart ſome time to wean itſelf from it's former attachment.

Father. Pſhaw! one woman, like one nail, will drive out the thoughts of another. Your heart muſt be ſtrangely ſtupified, if it does not dance to the muſick of twenty thouſand pounds. Remember, ſon, the eſtate you are to enjoy at my deceaſe does not amount to quite ſixteen hundred pounds per annum; and that I have been obliged to mortgage ſome part of it, to diſcharge the debts your extravagant elder brother contracted before he died. Emilia's fortune will retrieve all. Well, the breaking off your match with Iſabinda is the moſt lucky thing that could have happened.

Lyſimor. But, Sir, we cannot be ſure the young lady will approve my ſuit.

Father. Mr. Countwell will manage that. He is a ſhrewd man, he knows what he does, and will undertake nothing without performing it. You have only to ſay a few fine things to Emilia, which you know well enough how to do, when once you get Iſabinda out of your head.

Lyſimor. Sir, I ſhall uſe my beſt endeavours to obey you in every thing.

Father. That is well ſaid. I want no obedience but what is for your own intereſt, and will leave you to reflect how many charms there are in twenty thouſand pounds, and then you will fall in love with the fortune, whether ever you do ſo with the lady or not.

This converſation being ended, I recollected that I had ſome affairs of my own to diſpatch, and began to think of retiring, but was prevented by Lyſimor; who walking in a continued and very haſty motion about the room, obliged me to keep cloſe in the corner where I had placed myſelf, and not venture to ſtir, leſt he ſhould ruſh againſt me. At firſt I was a little vexed at this confinement, but afterwards rejoiced heartily at it, as it gave me an opportunity of making a diſcovery, which otherwiſe, perhaps, I ſhould have found much more difficult to attain.

Lyſimor, after ruminating for a conſiderable time, rung the bell for his footman; who, on his entrance, received for his firſt command to ſhut the door: that done, he made no ſcruple to inform the fellow, who I ſoon found was in all his ſecrets, of the concern he was in for Iſabinda; the promiſe he had given of taking her under his protection; and the vexation he was in to find a proper lodging for her, ſo that his father might not ſuſpect he had any hand in her eſcape, nor her own be able to diſcover where ſhe was concealed.

To this the man, after a pretty long pauſe, replied, that he had a ſiſter who was a widow, and lived in a very remote and obſcure part of the town; that her houſe was clean, though ſmall; that her family conſiſted only of herſelf, an infant ſucking at her breaſt, and a country girl who did the buſineſs of a ſervant: and added, that if the lady could content herſelf with ſo mean an abode, he was certain ſhe might remain there concealed as long as ſhe ſhould think fit.

Lyſimor ſeemed overjoyed at this propoſal, and bid him go directly to his ſiſter, apprize her of the affair as far as it was neceſſary, and give her a ſtrict charge to prepare every thing in as decent a manner as ſhe could for the reception of her fair gueſt. The fellow went to execute his commiſſion, and I ſlid ſoftly round the room till I got to the door, and followed him, but not to the place where he was going; for having already found, by the diſcourſe he had with his maſter, the name and ſituation of the ſtreet, I had no buſineſs to take ſo long a walk, till ſomething more material excited my curioſity.

Lyſimor himſelf, however, was not more

more punctual to the time appointed by Iſabinda, than I was to know the iſſue of this adventure. It wanted ſome minutes of twelve when I arrived at the corner of the ſquare, and had but juſt poſted myſelf under a lamp, when I ſaw Lyſimor come muffled up in his cloak, and attended by his ſervant. We had not waited above a quarter of an hour, before we ſaw Iſabinda ſteal out of her father's houſe, with a bundle under her arm almoſt as big as herſelf. Lyſimor, perceiving how ſhe was loaded, made his man haſten to eaſe her of it; after which ſhe rather flew than ran into the arms of her deliverer, for ſo ſhe called him; adding—'Oh, can you pardon the trouble 'I have given you!' To which he replied—'Call not that a trouble which 'I ſhall always look upon as the greateſt 'happineſs of my life.' I could hear diſtinctly little more of what they ſaid to each other, the footman being between us. They walked very faſt through the ſquare, and down a ſtreet which turned from it, where a hackney-coach waited to receive them; and, as ſoon as they were entered, drove away with all imaginable ſpeed. I had neither the will nor the power to purſue them, ſo returned home, to reflect at leiſure on the paſſages I had been witneſs of.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINS SOME MORE INTERESTING PARTICULARS OF THIS ADVENTURE; AND SHEWS THAT PEOPLE, BY FLYING FROM ONE THING WHICH THEY THINK WOULD BE A MISFORTUNE, OFTEN RUN INTO OTHERS OF A NATURE MORE TO BE DREADED.

MUCH as I had condemned Flaminio for his bigotted ſuperſtition, I could not wholly abſolve Iſabinda for the ſtep ſhe had taken. I wondered not that ſhe was fearful of being forced into a ſtate of life which few ladies of her years would chuſe, but I wondered that ſhe was not alſo fearful of putting herſelf into the power of a man who loved her, and whom ſhe paſſionately loved. She muſt certainly either not have conſidered the dangers to which ſhe might be expoſed, or have depended too much on the ſtrength of her own virtue. Beſides, ſhe could not be ſo ignorant as not to know that no woman can be made a nun, any more than ſhe can be made a wife, againſt her will; and a leſs ſhare of courage than ſhe ſhewed in this midnight elopement, would have enabled her, on her entrance within the walls of the convent, to declare ſhe had neither call nor inclination to receive the veil; on which neither the abbeſs, nor the biſhop of the dioceſe, could have conſented to her admiſſion into holy orders. It is true, that her father might have confined her there a penſioner as long as he thought fit; but as this would not have anſwered his end in devoting her to the ſervice of the church, by way of propitiation for his offences, there is no doubt to be made but that he would ſhortly have recalled her home; and perhaps, too, been convinced of his folly in attempting a thing ſo abſurd in itſelf, as well as cruel to his daughter.

I am ſenſible, that many of my fair young readers will be apt to quarrel with me for my animadverſions on Iſabinda's conduct in this point, and cry out, if they were in her place they would do the ſame. It is very likely, indeed, that they would do ſo; and full as likely that they would meet with ſomething to make them heartily repent of their inadvertency. There are others again, who will ſay, that they can have no compaſſion for whatever misfortunes may befal a girl who thus raſhly throws herſelf under the protection of a man not akin to her: but I believe the number of thoſe who are ſo hard-hearted will be very few; except ſome profeſſed prudes, who exclaim violently againſt the leaſt miſconduct in publick, yet make no ſcruple of giving themſelves the greateſt looſe in private.

But to return to the melancholy detail I am now upon. Having little to do with my time the next morning, I went to the houſe where I knew Iſabinda was placed for ſhelter from her father's power. I gained an eaſy acceſs, the door being open, as is generally the cuſtom in mean houſes. On my going up ſtairs, I found the unhappy beauty ſitting in a very penſive poſture, leaning her head againſt the corner of a cupboard, which I ſuppoſe ſerved her for a larder; for I ſaw a ſmall ſlice of butter and the remains of a half-penny roll lying. Frequent ſighs iſſued from her breaſt, and ſome tears

fell. Strange indeed would it have been, if a young lady, bred up in all the delicacies of life, could have worn a chearful countenance in such a change of situation; though, as the fellow had told his master, the room, and all the furniture it contained, was extremely clean, and shewed the housewifery of the owner, yet nothing could have more the face of poverty.

She seemed buried, as it were, in a profound contemplation; when the sound of somebody coming up the stairs made her raise her head a little, probably guessing from whom it proceeded. Lysimor presently appeared; and on sight of him, a dawn of joy overspread her face. He ran to her, embraced her, and said the most tender things, intermixed with some expressions of concern, that the necessity of her being concealed left him not the power of providing a place for her more suitable to her merit and his affection. She could not now restrain her tears from flowing, which occasioned the following discourse.

Isabinda. Ah, Lysimor, I beg you will not talk to me in this manner; but rather use all your rhetorick to assist my weak endeavours to suit my humour to my condition! To be easy, I must forget what I have been, and wish to be no more than what I am.

Lysimor. You never can be other than the most charming and most worthy of your sex.

Isabinda. Alas! I have no longer any pretence to compliments like these: I have now, as the poet says—

'No name, no family to call my own;
'But am an outcast, and a vagabond.'

As such I must hereafter live: and, that I may lose all remembrance of my former state, I have brought away my jewels and best apparel, for no other end than to dispose of them, and purchase others more conformable to my future circumstances.

Lysimor. Torture not thus a heart to which you are dearer than the vital blood that gives it motion! Can you believe I would suffer you to part with any of those appendages to your birth and rank? No, I would rather add to them. Do you not know that my whole fortune is at your devotion?

Isabinda. I must not, Sir, accept it.

Lysimor. Why not accept? too scrupulous Isabinda! But if you are above receiving the tribute of a lover, command whatever you may have occasion for on the score of a brother. My dear Adario, I know, will readily discharge the obligation.

Isabinda. I am sure he will; and on that condition, if Providence presents no other way for my support, will not refuse your generous offer.

Lysimor. Think then no more of submitting to any thing unworthy of your character. I flatter myself our misfortunes are not of long continuance; that your father will repent him of his cruel resolution, and mine forget the affront offered to his family, and we may yet be happy.

Isabinda. I dare not entertain a hope so distant.

Lysimor. You know not how prophetick my passion may prove. In the mean time, I should be glad, methinks, to be made acquainted with the motive that has caused this sudden revolution in our fate.

Isabinda. Though I am loth to expose the secrets, I might say the follies, of a father, yet I cannot refuse you.

Perceiving now that she was preparing herself to make a detail of those particulars I had heard before, and I in a preceding chapter have communicated to the reader, I would not stay to hear a second repetition, but came away, and left the lovers together for that time. From thence I went to the house of Flaminio; where I found, as I expected, every thing in distraction: messengers running backwards and forwards; some returning from their fruitless search of Isabinda, others going to places where they had not before been sent; and the old gentleman himself so overcome with rage and grief, that he was scarce capable of giving the necessary orders for what he most desired.

Some other adventures, which I shall hereafter publish, then falling in my way, I had no leisure to make a second visit to Isabinda for the space of near three weeks. But how shall I express my concern for that unfortunate young lady, when, on my going thither, I found her in the manner I did, and that all the apprehensions I had been in on her account had but too solid a foundation! When wild desire presides over the heart of man, what is his boasted honour?

what

what his virtue? what his regard for the happineſs and reputation of the woman he pretends to love?—all ſhadowy nothings, vain ideas, which, like the Sybil's words wrote on the leaves of trees, are blown off and ſcattered through the air with every guſt of paſſion. But to proceed.

No obſtruction being in my way, I paſſed directly up to Iſabinda's chamber; but finding the door faſt locked, began to imagine ſhe was either removed, or had ventured out to take the air; and was going down again, when I was prevented by the murmuring ſound of perſons talking within. I then put my ear cloſe to the key-hole, and eaſily knew the voices to be thoſe of Lyſimor and Iſabinda; on which I reſolved to wait till the door ſhould be opened, and in about three or four minutes after the woman of the houſe came up with two diſhes of chocolate and ſome biſcuits on a plate. She had the key in her pocket, and immediately gave entrance to me as well as herſelf. It was now more than paſt mid-day, yet Iſabinda had not left her bed. Lyſimor was ſitting on the ſide of it, as lately riſen; having both his feet on a chair, without either ſhoes or ſlippers. I was a little ſurprized at ſeeing him in this poſture; till the chocolate being ſerved, he ſaid to the woman—

Lyſimor. Has Jeffery prepared my boots as I directed laſt night?

Woman. Yes, an pleaſe your honour. He has ſo beſplaſhed them, and made the horſes heels ſo dirty, that one would ſwear they had come a journey of twenty miles this morning.

Lyſimor. That's right. It would have been ridiculous, after telling my father that I was gone a hunting, to have come home as clean as out of a lady's bedchamber. But go, and bid Jeffery bring the boots.

Lyſimor ſpoke this with a very gay air, but Iſabinda hung down her head; and, on the fellow's coming in, hid her face behind the curtain, nor uttered a ſyllable while he was in the room, which was no longer than to equip his maſter for departure. Lyſimor was no ſooner ready, and his ſervant withdrawn, than he approached the bed, and began to take his leave of Iſabinda, with a very tender embrace, accompanied with ſome ſoft words. She made no other reply, for a conſiderable time, than returning his careſſes; but at laſt broke out into theſe expreſſions—

Iſabinda. Ah, Lyſimor, ſhould you forget your vows, deſpiſe the conqueſt you have gained, and leave me to lament my eaſy faith, how miſerable, how abandoned beyond the power of words to expreſs, would be the condition of your Iſabinda!

Lyſimor. Unkind and cauſeleſs apprehenſion! My deareſt love, let not the thoughts of ſuch impoſſibilities diſturb you. Could I be ungrateful, after being made happy in this proof of your affection, I muſt be loſt to all ſenſe of honour, unworthy of the name of man, and even to breathe vital air.

Iſabinda. Well, then, I muſt, I will believe you; nor repent what I have done. But tell me, when will you come again?

Lyſimor. To-morrow, if I can; if not, you may depend on ſeeing me next day. Be aſſured, that every hour will ſeem an age to me till I ſee you. Farewel, thou ſofteſt loveliеſt of thy ſex!

He went; but, as I then fancied, with more the air of triumph than of real tenderneſs or reſpect in his deportment. Iſabinda then called for the woman of the houſe to aſſiſt her in riſing; and I left the place, with a heart full of forebodings for her future fate: indeed I truly pitied the ruined maid; and wiſhed ſhe never might have occaſion to cry out, with Monimia in the tragedy—

' ————————How often has he ſworn
' Nature ſhould change, the ſun and ſtars
' grow dark,
' Ere he would falſify his vows to me?
' Make haſte confuſion, then—ſun, loſe thy
' light,
' And ſtars drop down with ſorrow to the
' earth,
' For he is falſe—
' Falſe as the winds, the water, or the
' weather;
' Cruel as tigers o'er their trembling prey!
' I feel him in my breaſt! he tears my
' heart!
' And at each ſigh he drinks the guſhing
' blood!'

My curioſity having received this painful ſatisfaction, I imagined not that any farther diſcoveries, at leaſt that would be material enough to compenſate for the trouble I ſhould take, could be made in relation to theſe lovers; and therefore thought of returning no more, either to the

the apartment of Iſabinda, or to the houſe of Lyſimor. I ſhould, indeed, have endeavoured to loſe all memory of this unhappy tranſaction, if the talk of the town had not continually reminded me of it. Every one was full of Iſabinda's flight. Few, if any, beſides myſelf, were acquainted with the motive of it; and none knew to what place ſhe was retired: and the perfect ignorance people were in on both theſe ſcores, occaſioned various conjectures, and rendered the wonder much more laſting than otherwiſe it would have been.

But this was not all. Flaminio, pierced through with grief and indignation on not being able to find his daughter, and perhaps, too, with ſome mixture of remorſe for the cauſe he had given her to leave him, fell into a violent fever, of which he died, after languiſhing ſome days. By his laſt teſtament he bequeathed to his daughter, if ever ſhe ſhould be found, the ſum of three thouſand pounds; in order, as he cauſed it to be expreſſed in the writing, to keep her above the contempt of the world; and likewiſe, by the ſmallneſs of the portion, to keep her in perpetual remembrance of the falſe ſtep ſhe had taken.

Soon after this, I received certain intelligence, that Lyſimor was making his publick addreſſes to a fine young lady with a very large fortune. I doubted not but this was that ſame Emilia whom I had heard his father ſo ſtrongly recommend, and was fired with the utmoſt impatience to ſee how poor Iſabinda would behave on both theſe events. Accordingly, I went once more to the houſe where ſhe had been concealed; but, to my great diſappointment, found ſhe was gone from thence; nor could all my ſearch, joined with the aſſiſtance of my Inviſible Belt, enable me, for ſome time, to diſcover to what part of the town or country ſhe was removed.

CHAP. V.

COMPLEATS THE CATASTROPHE OF THIS TRULY TRAGICAL ADVENTURE.

ADARIO had proceeded on his travels no farther than Paris, when the account of his father's death obliged him to return to England with all poſſible expedition. Soon after his coming, I made an unſeen viſit at his houſe, where I found him, not like moſt young heirs, exulting in being the entire maſter of himſelf and fortune, and contriving in what kind of luxuries he ſhould diſpoſe of both, but full of the moſt ſincere and unaffected ſorrow. He was, indeed, one of thoſe few ſons who look on the poſſeſſion of an eſtate as no equivalent for the loſs of a good parent, ſuch as Flaminio ever had been to both his children, till that fatal caprice, which drove his daughter from his protection, had brought on her undoing, his own death, and was the ſource of other calamities of a yet more dreadful nature, as will preſently appear.

The ſtory of Iſabinda's elopement, and the uncertainty what fate had ſince attended her, was a matter of great affliction to this young gentleman. He loved his ſiſter with a very tender affection, and had hoped to have ſeen her, by this time, married to Lyſimor: but as his eſteem for that friend was no way leſſened by the match being broke off; and beſides, expecting to be better informed by him of the particulars of that affair, than he could be by any other perſon, he was impatient to ſee him, and I found had ſent him that morning notice of his arrival; for a letter, in anſwer to his meſſage, was delivered to him while I was there, the contents whereof were theſe—

'TO ADARIO.

'SIR,

'I Congratulate you on your ſafe return 'to England, and ſhould gladly have 'paid my compliments to you in per'ſon, if that honour had not been pro'hibited by an authority which I muſt 'not preſume to contend with. My 'father, reſenting the affront given by 'yours, which you cannot but have 'been informed of, has forbid me, 'under the penalty of his eternal diſ'pleaſure, to converſe with any of your 'family. He was at home when your 'ſervant came, and heard the meſſage 'you ſent delivered to me; on which 'he repeated his former injunction, and 'exacted a ſolemn oath of my obedience 'to it. You will therefore pardon my 'not waiting on you, and believe, that 'the

'the discontinuance of our acquaintance 'will always be extremely regretted by 'him who is, with all due respect, Sir, 'your most obedient servant,

'LYSIMOR.'

'Alas!' cried Adario, throwing the letter from him as soon as he had read it, 'how cold, how distant, is the air of 'this letter! how different from those I 'have been accustomed to receive from 'Lysimor! I find that, by one un-'lucky accident, I have at once lost a fa-'ther, a sister, and a friend.'

I thought I had now entirely done with this family; for, as Isabinda was not to be found, I expected nothing of consequence could be learned either at the house of Lysimor or Adario, so intended to make no more visits to those gentlemen. Chance, however, about five months afterwards, changed my resolution, and threw something in my way which no diligence of my own could ever have attained. As I was going one morning on my invisible progression, I happened to pass by the house of Adario. He was at the door, and about to step into a hackney-coach which waited for him; when a fellow, who had the appearance of a groom, came running towards him, almost breathless with the haste he had made, and cried out—'Oh, 'Sir, I have joyful news for you! I 'beg your honour will turn back to 'hear it.' These words revived my former curiosity; and finding Adario complied with his servant's request, I followed them into the parlour, and was witness of the ensuing discourse.

Groom. Oh, Sir, I have seen my young lady!

Adario. What young lady? Not my sister!

Groom. Yes, indeed, Sir! As I was going to fetch the horse your honour sent me for, I saw Madam Isabinda looking through the window of a house at the corner of a little lane just by Islington.

Adario. Are you sure it was she?

Groom. As sure as I am alive, Sir! Though, poor lady, she is very much altered; very thin, and pale.

Adario. I fancy you are mistaken. If my sister were so near London, she would certainly either have sent or come, to claim the legacy left her by my father, which I suppose she has need enough of by this time. I am resolved to be convinced, notwithstanding. Do you think she lodges there?

Groom. Yes, Sir; for she was all undressed, and looked as if she was just out of bed.

Adario. And can you know the house again?

Groom. O yes, Sir; I took particular notice of it.

Adario. Well, then, I will only send an excuse to the gentleman I was to meet this morning, and go directly. You shall get upon the coach-box, and order the fellow where to drive; but let him stop short of the house, that my sister, if it be she, may not be apprized of my coming before she sees me.

While Adario was calling one of his footmen to send on the message he had mentioned, I ran to the end of the street, went into a narrow dark passage, and plucked off my Belt; then having recovered the appearance of what I am, a real substance, I popped into an empty coach that had just set down a fare, and bid the driver to follow wherever that went which was standing at Adario's door. Both the coaches drove with such speed, that we soon reached the end of our little journey. I quitted my vehicle the moment I saw the other preparing to stop; but though I made all imaginable haste to put on my Belt, I could scarce have regained my invisibility time enough to have entered with Adario, if he had not met with an obstruction in his passage from the woman of the house, who at first denied she had any lady lodged with her; then said, she had none of the name he enquired for: on which he replied with some heat, that the lady might have reasons for concealing her real name. 'But tell her,' cried he, 'that mine is Adario; that I 'am her brother, and must needs see 'her.' On this she seemed somewhat more compliable, and said she would go and acquaint the lady. Accordingly she went up stairs; but Adario was too impatient to wait her return, and followed her directly: I was but one step behind him; and we were both in the room before she could deliver any part of her message.

Isabinda was adjusting something about her dress before a looking-glass; but happening to turn her head just as Adario was within the door, shrieked out—'Oh 'heavens, my brother!' and with these words

words fell back in her chair. The woman went to fetch some water. Adario ran to support the fainting fair; but happening to cast his eyes upon the table, saw a letter lying there, the superscription of which was in Isabinda's hand, and addressed to Lysimor. Emotions more strong than pity, at this time, made him quit his sister to examine the contents of this surprizing billet, which were these—

'MY DEAR, DEAR LYSIMOR!

'FOR such you are, and ever must 'be, to my fond doating heart; 'though I have too much cause to fear 'the tender epithet is now no longer 'pleasing to you. Ah, Lysimor, how 'sad is the reverse of my condition! 'From seeing you twice or thrice every 'week, I now see you not once a month; 'and even then how cold is your behaviour! how short your visits! How 'cruel is this to one who neither can, 'nor wishes, to enjoy any conversation 'but yours! For pity's sake, if not 'for love, render my life more easy, at 'least for the present, whatever you do 'hereafter. The infant I carry within 'me sympathizes in it's mother's anguish, and continually upbraids you 'with convulsive heavings. Even if 'your vows of everlasting constancy 'should be forgot, let some consideration of the unborn innocent, the 'pledge of our once mutual loves, 'oblige you to treat with less indifference it's unhappy mother,

'The ruined ISABINDA.

'P. S. I can no longer bear your 'absence, else would not have 'troubled you with this com'plaint.'

What a letter was this to fall into a brother's hands! Never did I see a man in such distraction. 'Villain! villain 'Lysimor!—Wretched Isabinda!' cried he out. Then turning towards her—'But there needed not this proof in thy 'own hand,' added he; 'thy shame is 'but too visible.' Isabinda, who by the assistance of the woman was now recovered from her swoon, but not enough to hear what her brother said, threw herself at his feet, and, with streaming eyes, addressed him in these terms—

Isabinda. Oh, Sir! can you forgive my concealing myself from you?

Adario. Would to God that there were equal reason to forgive the cause!

Isabinda at this instant turning up her eyes, beheld her letter in his hand, and cried out, with the greatest vehemence—'I am now undone, indeed! irrecoverably lost to all hope of pardon or pity! '—my shame exposed to him from 'whom, of all the world, it should have 'been most hid!'

Adario. Rise, sister, and cease these unavailing exclamations. Your shame will receive no addition by my knowledge of it; rather, perhaps, be remedied. But tell, and tell me truly, has Lysimor ever promised marriage to you?

Isabinda. A thousand and a thousand times, and bound himself to the performance by the most solemn imprecations.

Adario. Then he is doubly a villain! and, if you believe him, you are doubly deceived. He courts another woman.

Isabinda. Indeed, of late, I have suspected this, and often accused him of it, and he as often has forsworn it.

Adario. Mere words of course! But say, have you no testimony, under his own hand, of the promise he made you, either by letter or by formal obligation?

Isabinda. None, none, alas!

On this Adario bit his lips, walked two or three times about the room, then paused, and seemed as if debating within himself in what manner he should behave: at last sat down; and taking the still weeping Isabinda by the hand, endeavoured to assuage her grief.

Adario. Come, Isabinda, dry your tears. Love and credulity have seduced your innocence. Great has been your fault; but yet I cannot forget you are my sister, and that you have no friend but me on whom you can depend for consolation. What is past cannot be recalled, but it may be redressed. Be assured you shall one way or other have justice.

Isabinda. Ah, Sir, I beseech you proceed not to extremities! If by my crime you should be involved in any danger or perplexities, it would sink me quite.

Adario. I hope there will be no occasion. Lysimor was once a man of honour, and may yet return to his first principles.

principles. On this you may rely, that I shall do nothing rashly, nor inconsistent with your interest and reputation.

After this, they fell into some discourse concerning the strange resolution Flaminio had taken of sending her to a monastery; the particulars of which the reader being already acquainted with, I shall pass over in silence. When Adario took his leave, he did it with a great deal of affection: but I was much divided in my thoughts, whether I should stay with Isabinda, or follow Adario home; the latter seemed most flattering to my curiosity, as, by many tokens, I perceived he had something in his head which he was impatient to put in execution. I was not deceived in my conjectures: Adario was no sooner in his own house, than he flew to his bureau; and, without taking any time for deliberation, wrote this epistle to Lysimor—

'SIR,

'CONSCIOUS guilt, without those 'commands you seem so zealous 'in observing, might well make you 'avoid the presence of a person you 'have so greatly injured. When I re-'commended you to my sister, it was in 'order to become her protector, not her 'undoer. How cruelly you have abused 'this confidence, let your own heart re-'mind you! But I have some hope, 'how much soever appearances at pre-'sent are to the contrary, you still in-'tend to do justice to your promises to 'Isabinda, and the claim she has to 'your affection. I need not tell you, 'that you can repair the misfortune you 'have brought upon her no otherwise 'than by an honourable marriage: I 'am ready to fulfil the agreement made 'between our fathers on that score, 'and give my sister the sum of eight 'thousand pounds, as was then stipu-'lated. If you comply with this pro-'posal, I shall be glad to see you at her 'lodgings, there to settle every thing: 'if not, shall expect you will meet me 'in another place; and give me the sa-'tisfaction which every gentleman has 'a right to demand when he finds him-'self ill used. I attend your determi-'nation; and am, &c.

'ADARIO.'

He sent this by one of his servants, with a charge to give it into Lysimor's own hands, and wait his answer. After which, being told dinner was ready, he went down, and placed himself at the table, though I believe with very little appetite; for his countenance had upon it all the marks of the greatest inward disturbance, which was not at all lessened when his man returned with this from Lysimor—

'SIR,

'SINCE I find you are so well ac-'quainted with a secret which, 'for the lady's sake, I could wish had 'been inviolably kept, I think my-'self obliged to deal sincerely with you 'on the occasion. You may be as-'sured I can behave to no woman, 'much less your sister, otherwise than 'becomes a man of honour: but mar-'riage is a thing quite out of the ques-'tion, as I am certain my father never 'would consent to it. If any promises 'on that account ever escaped my lips, 'I remember nothing of them, and 'could make them with no other view 'than to give her modesty an excuse for 'yielding. I am sorry, however, for 'what has happened: but you cannot 'be insensible of the frailties of flesh 'and blood; and must know, as well 'as I, that when two young people, 'who like each other, are much alone 'together, such accidents will natu-'rally occur. The resentment you 'threaten, on my non-compliance with 'your proposal, appears therefore to me 'a little unreasonable; I shall, notwith-'standing, be ready to give you the 'satisfaction you desire, at any time or 'place you shall appoint. Yours, &c.

'LYSIMOR.'

All the blood now seemed to have forsook the heart of Adario to rush into his face: his lips trembled, his very eyeballs started with excess of passion. He hesitated not a moment what he should do; but, in this tempest of his mind, wrote as follows to Lysimor—

'SIR,

'I Want words to return the insolence 'and ingratitude of your reply; 'but have a sword at your service, 'which I expect you will try the metal 'of to-morrow morning about seven, 'in the field behind Montague House. 'As the dispute between us will ad-

'mit of no witneſſes, pray come 'alone to

'ADARIO.'

Though I knew my own dinner waited for me, I could not prevail on myſelf to go home, till Adario had diſpatched this billet to Lyſimor, and the ſervant who carried it was come back from that gentleman with a ſmall ſlip of paper tied up, containing only theſe words—

'SIR,

'YOU may depend that I ſhall not 'fail to meet you as deſired.

'LYSIMOR.'

I now quitted the houſe of Adario; but, after having related the pains I had already taken, I believe nobody will ſuppoſe I neglected going the next morning to the field, to ſee the iſſue of this combat. I found Adario was there firſt; but though he waited only a very few minutes for Lyſimor, his impatience made him not forbear ſaluting him in this manner.

Adario. I began to think, Lyſimor, that the ſhame of having done a baſe action would not ſuffer you to defend it.

Lyſimor. Sir, whatever I dare do, I always dare defend.

Adario. Then, Sir, this is no time for words.

Lyſimor. I am ready for you, Sir.

Here ceaſed all farther ſpeech between them, and on the part of Lyſimor for ever. On the ſecond puſh, Adario ran him quite through the body; he fell that inſtant, and expired with only a ſingle groan. His ſucceſsful antagoniſt approached the body; and finding life was totally extinguiſhed, gave a ſigh or two to the memory of a man he once had called his friend, then made the beſt of his way home, in order to provide for his own ſecurity, which the likelihood there was of the challenge he had ſent to the deceaſed being found rendered highly neceſſary.

The meaſures he took, indeed, were very prudent. He ſent immediately to hire a poſt-chaiſe, which was to wait for him in a ſtreet he mentioned, at ſome diſtance from that in which he lived; carried no baggage with him, but ordered a ſervant to follow him with it to Calais; ſtaid no longer at his own houſe than to write two ſhort letters; the one to a gentleman who had been one of the executors of his father's will, which being only on family affairs, need not be here inſerted; the other was to his ſiſter Iſabinda, and contained theſe lines—

'SISTER,

'FAILING to repair your wrongs 'by the way I hoped, I have re-'venged them by the death of your ſe-'ducer; for which I am obliged this 'moment to leave my native country, 'perhaps for ever. I have done what 'the honour of our family exacted from 'me. It belongs to you to regulate 'your future conduct, ſo as to atone, 'in ſome meaſure, for the errors of the 'paſt. To enable you to do this, you 'ought to keep in eternal remembrance, 'that the follies of your fatal paſſion 'have not only brought the object of it 'to an untimely grave, but alſo drove 'from all the ſocial joys of life, into 'an irkſome baniſhment in a foreign 'land, him who might have been hap-'py, if he had not been your brother,

'ADARIO.'

Thinking, perhaps, he had been ſomewhat too ſevere in the above, he added this poſtſcript, by way of cordial—

'P. S. I ſhall conſtantly write to 'Mr. D——n: he will be able to 'inform you how to direct for me. 'You may be aſſured I ſhall re-'ceive with pleaſure any letters 'that bring me an account of your 'welfare; and, in ſpite of all that 'has happened, do you every ſer-'vice in my power.'

After having ſent this by the groom who had firſt diſcovered the place of her abode, and given ſome neceſſary inſtructions to his other ſervants, he hurried away to meet the poſt-chaiſe, and I ſaw him no more. As I had truly pitied Iſabinda, I could not forbear going to ſee in what manner ſhe ſupported this laſt dreadful accident. On my entrance, ſhe was in bed, and ſurrounded by women and phyſicians. I gathered from their diſcourſe, that the ſurprize and grief ſhe had been in had cauſed an abortion, accompanied with fits of a very dangerous nature. On my next viſit, however, I found her youth, and the ſtrength of her conſtitution, had got the better of her diſeaſe; but though the pains

pains of her body were removed, thoſe of her mind ſtill remained: ſhe was extremely melancholy, had a thorough contempt for the world; and the thoughts of a monaſtery were now ſo far from being ſhocking to her, that ſhe reſolved to fly to one, as the only aſylum from cenſure and from care. Accordingly, as I was afterwards informed, ſhe went, on the re-eſtabliſhment of her health, to Paris, and entered herſelf into the ſociety of Benedictine Nuns; where I doubt not but ſhe often ſees her brother through the grate, as he ſtill continues to reſide in that city.

I have now finiſhed all the account I am able to give of this melancholy tranſaction; in which the juſtice of Providence ſeems to me to be diſtinguiſhed in ſomewhat of a peculiar manner; and may ſerve as a warning to our gay, amorous ſparks, not to become the ſeducers of unwary innocence; eſpecially if they will be at the trouble of reflecting, how the perfidy and ingratitude of Flaminio to the believing Harriot was afterwards retorted on his own darling daughter.

CHAP. VI.

GIVES THE ACCOUNT OF AN OCCURRENCE NO LESS REMARKABLE THAN ENTERTAINING; AND SHEWS, THAT THERE IS SCARCE ANY DIFFICULTY SO GREAT, BUT IT MAY BE GOT OVER BY THE HELP OF A READY INVENTION, IF PROPERLY EXERTED.

TO make ſome atonement for my laſt melancholy recital, to thoſe of my readers who may not care to have their heads filled with ſubjects of too ſerious a nature, I ſhall now preſent them with one more likely to put in motion the riſible muſcles of the face, than to extort the falling of unwilling tears.

A gentleman, whom I ſhall call Conrade, had lived to the age of ſixty without ever teſtifying the leaſt inclination to marriage. He had been a man of pleaſure in his youth; and probably the too great ſucceſs he then found among the fair, had deterred him from entering into an honourable engagement with any of the ſex: but there is no accounting for change of ſentiment in this point; an accident ſometimes puts that into our heads which before we never thought of, or perhaps had an averſion to, as it fell out in the caſe of the gentleman I am ſpeaking of. A long friendſhip had ſubſiſted between him and Murcio; a gentleman who, though not ſo far advanced in years, had made a better uſe of his time; had been married, and was the father of three fine daughters, two of whom had always lived with him; but the youngeſt, after the death of his wife, was taken from him, and brought up under the care of an aunt in the country. The eldeſt of theſe ladies being now about to be diſpoſed of in marriage, Conrade received and accepted an invitation to the wedding. Melanthe, ſiſter to the bride, was a fine ſparkling girl of nineteen; but whether it were that ſhe appeared in reality more lovely than uſual, or that the mirth and pleaſantries common at ſuch ſolemnities rekindled the long-ſmothered embers of amorous deſire in the breaſt of Conrade, ſo it was, that he, who had been in the company of this young lady without ever taking any notice of her charms, all at once became extremely ſmitten with them; inſomuch, that he reſolved to acquaint her father with his new paſſion, and aſk his conſent to make his addreſſes to her; which he did not at all deſpair of obtaining on the terms he intended to propoſe.

Murcio had a pretty country-houſe at a village about ten or twelve miles up the river; where he conſtantly went every Saturday, and ſtaid till Monday or Tueſday, and ſometimes longer. It was while he was in this retirement, that Conrade choſe to communicate to him the buſineſs he had in his head: accordingly, he went thither, and found him entirely alone; Melanthe having been prevented from going, as ſhe was accuſtomed to do, by a violent fit of the tooth-ache. This our old lover looked upon as a good omen, being deſirous to engage the father in favour of his paſſion before he made any declaration to the daughter. He began with ſaying, that he now repented having lived ſo long a batchelor; that having a very large eſtate, he ſhould be glad of an heir to enjoy it; that if he could prevail on a young lady whom he liked to marry him, he would endeavour to atone for the want of youth by all the indulgences in the power of a fond huſband: and having thus prepared the way, told him, that if he thought proper to beſtow

ſtow Melanthe upon him, he would deſire no other fortune than her perſon; yet would ſettle a dowry upon her ſuperior to what might be expected if ſhe brought him ten thouſand pounds.

It is not to be imagined with what greedineſs Murcio ſwallowed this propoſal: he did not even affect to heſitate, or make the leaſt demur at accepting it; on the contrary, he replied, that nothing could afford him a greater ſatisfaction than ſuch an alliance, and that he doubted not but Melanthe would receive the honour he intended her as a woman who knew her own intereſt and happineſs. Both parties being equally tranſported, every thing was immediately agreed upon between them: but Murcio not being able to aſſure himſelf that his daughter would ſo readily comply as he had made the lover hope ſhe would; and fearing that, if ſhe ſhould give the old gentleman a rebuff on his firſt onſet, it might diſcourage him from making a ſecond, and perhaps overturn the whole affair, reſolved not to hazard the leſs of ſo advantageous a match by leaving it to her own choice, but ſent a ſpecial meſſenger to her with a letter, the contents whereof are theſe—

'DEAR CHILD,

'MY worthy friend Conrade has 'taken a great liking to you, 'and will make you his wife on ſuch 'terms as would but little prove the 'paternal affection I have for you to re'ject. Be not you leſs thankful to 'Heaven for ſo unhoped a bleſſing than 'I am; nor, on any fooliſh pretences, 'either ſlight, or ſeem to ſlight, the 'good preſented to you. If you con'ſider the vaſt advantages of this 'match, a diſparity of years can be no 'objection. I ſay thus much, becauſe 'I would convince your reaſon, not en'force your action; for I ſhould be 'ſorry to find myſelf obliged to make 'uſe of the authority I have over you 'in a thing which you ought, and I 'hope will, receive with the ſame ſatiſ'faction I propoſe it. Know, however, 'that I have already agreed on every 'thing for your marriage; that your 'future huſband is now here, and we 'ſhall both be in town either to-mor'row or the enſuing day. I ſend this 'on purpoſe to prepare you to behave 'towards him in a proper manner, 'and as it is the abſolute command 'of him who is your affectionate fa'ther,

'MURCIO.'

I ſtood behind Melanthe's chair while ſhe was reading this epiſtle, and never did I ſee a poor young creature in ſuch agitations. Scarce had ſhe come to the end of the firſt period, before ſhe cried out—'His wife! his wife! What 'terms can the old creature propoſe 'to compenſate for the odious title 'of wife to ſuch a wretch!' Then going a little farther—'Juſtly, indeed,' ſaid ſhe, 'does my father ſuſpect my 'obedience in this point; death itſelf 'would not be ſo dreadful to me as 'compliance.' The more ſhe proceeded, the higher her diſtraction grew. 'What! fix my doom at once!' raved ſhe out; 'at once reſolve to cut me off 'from all the joys of life, and condemn 'me to everlaſting miſery! Is this a 'parent's love! Oh, 'tis moſt cruel, 'moſt unnatural!' I know not to what extravagances ſhe might have been hurried, by the ſudden ruſh of grief and deſpair, if tears now had not afforded their relief; but though they a little ſoftened the aſperity of her paſſion, they had not the power to ſubdue it: her tongue, indeed, ceaſed from exclaiming againſt her fate; but the agonies of her countenance diſcovered how much ſhe inwardly regretted it. While ſhe was in this diſtreſsful and pity-moving ſituation, the gay, the lively Florimel, came in. This young lady was the moſt beloved and intimate companion that Melanthe had; ſhe ſaw her almoſt every day, and always entered without ceremony. She ſeemed a little ſurprized, at firſt ſight, to find her thus; but immediately recovering herſelf, approached her with her accuſtomed ſprightlineſs.

Florimel. Heyday, Melanthe! what, in the name of wonder, makes you in this pickle? Is your favourite ſquirrel dead? or has any accident happened to your laſt new petit-en-l'air? or what other misfortune has befallen you?

Melanthe. O Florimel, what would I not give to be in thy condition!

Florimel. My condition! Why, what do you find to envy in my condition?

Melanthe. To have no father to controul your actions by an unreaſonable exertion of his authority.

Florimel. Why, truly, as you ſay, theſe old dads are troubleſom enough ſometimes;

ſometimes; yet, for all that, I ſhould be heartily glad mine were alive again. But pray, what has yours done to make you wiſh yourſelf an orphan?

Melanthe. Read that, and ſee if I have not cauſe.

In ſpeaking theſe words, ſhe pointed to her father's letter, which lay open on the table. Florimel took it up, and read it, as deſired. On examining the contents, ſhe could not help looking a little grave; but having finiſhed, reſumed the diſcourſe with her former vivacity.

Florimel. As ſure as I am alive, both theſe old gentlemen are crack-brained; the one in thinking of you for a wife, and the other in conſenting to give you ſuch a huſband.

Melanthe. One would, indeed, imagine they were not in their ſenſes.

Florimel. For my part, I am ſo aſtoniſhed, that I can ſcarce believe I am awake. But what will you do?

Melanthe. Nothing.

Florimel. 'Nothing can come of 'nothing,' as King Lear ſays in the play. I am leſs ſurprized, however, at your ſtupidity in ſo perplexing a dilemma, than I am at the folly of thoſe who have involved you in it. Bleſs me! what can either your lover or father propoſe to themſelves by ſuch a diſproportionate alliance, but horns on the one ſide, and diſgrace to his family on the other?

Melanthe. No, Florimel, it ſhall never come to that; I will rather ſtarve or beg.

Florimel. Look'ye, my dear, neither ſtarving nor begging, as I take it, will agree with your conſtitution; ſomething elſe muſt be thought on.

Melanthe. What elſe?

Florimel. Do you think, that when your father comes to know what an implacable averſion you have to this match, he will not be prevailed upon to recal the promiſe he has made to Conrade?

Melanthe. Impoſſible! I know his temper too well to flatter myſelf with ſuch a hope. You might as well think to blow St. Paul's from it's foundation with a ſingle breath, as move him to recede from any thing he has once reſolved.

Florimel. Well, then, ſuppoſe ſome way could be contrived to make Conrade himſelf fly off? I have a project in my head that promiſes fair for it, if you will agree to join in the execution. It is this: you muſt admit a ſpruce young gallant to lie with you all night; Conrade muſt be informed of the amour, in ſuch a manner as to make him convinced of the truth of it; and the deuce is in him, if afterwards he inſiſts on marrying you.

Melanthe. Fie, Florimel! How can you be ſo cruel as to rally my misfortunes?

Florimel. No, I proteſt I am as ſerious as a judge upon a criminal cauſe; and would have you make the experiment.

Melanthe. What, wouldſt thou have me turn proſtitute to avoid marriage!

Florimel. No ſuch matter. I will engage that the gallant I mean ſhall lie as harmleſs by your ſide as an infant.

Melanthe. Pr'ythee do not torture me with ſuch riddles.

Florimel. I ſhall preſently explain them. The gallant I am ſpeaking of, and who is to be your bedfellow, is no other than my own individual ſelf. I ſhall put on a ſuit of my brother's cloaths; and do not doubt but that, when I am dreſſed and equipped in all my accoutrements, I ſhall be a figure handſome enough to make an old man jealous.

Melanthe. Sure never was ſo wild a ſcheme! But yet I cannot conceive how it is to be conducted, or which way it can anſwer the end you propoſe by it.

Florimel. Lord, you are ſtrangely dull! or affect to be ſo; but I will ſhew you what I ſhall write to Conrade, and that may help to enlighten your underſtanding.

This witty lady waited not to hear what reply her friend would make, but ran to a deſk, and immediately wrote the following lines—

'TO HUGH CONRADE, ESQ.

'SIR

'EVER ſince I heard of your intended marriage with Melanthe, 'I have been divided in my thoughts, 'whether the treachery of betraying a 'ſecret entruſted to me, or, by con'cealing it, expoſe a gentleman of your 'character to the worſt of miſchiefs, 'would be the moſt diſhonourable ac'tion. The latter conſideration has at 'laſt prevailed; and I think it my duty 'to inform you, that the lady you are 'about to make your wife has neither 'heart nor honour to beſtow upon you; 'both

'both are already diſpoſed of to a perſon ſhe thinks more agreeable to her 'years. Not content with the many 'private aſſignations ſhe has with him 'abroad, ſhe frequently makes pre-'tences, when her father goes into the 'country, to be left at home; where 'her chambermaid, who is in the ſe-'cret, admits this happy lover at mid-'night, and lets him out early in the 'morning, before the other ſervants of 'the houſe are ſtirring. Murcio be-'ing gone to *****, I am well aſſured 'it will be in your power to convince 'yourſelf of the certainty of this intel-'ligence, by ſending any one on whom 'you can depend to watch about the 'door, either for the entrance or exit of 'the favourite gallant. Act as you 'pleaſe, however. I have diſcharged 'the dictates of conſcience in giving you 'this timely warning; and am,

'Your nameleſs ſervant.'

This ſhe gave Melanthe to read; and, as ſoon as ſhe had done, was going to aſk her how ſhe approved of the contrivance; when the other prevented her, by crying out—

Melanthe. Oh the wicked, lying letter! Dear Florimel, if this ſhould be ſent, and Conrade ſhould ſhew it to my father, I believe he would kill me.

Florimel. 'Tis poſſible he may not ſhew it; but if he does, you have only to prepare yourſelf for a little ſcolding and ſwearing. The worſt he can do is to turn you out of doors; and then, to uſe your own words, it can be but ſtarving or begging.

Melanthe. Oh, but my reputation, Florimel!

Florimel. A fiddle of your reputation! Would you hazard nothing to avoid being tacked, till death do you part, to ſuch a lump of decayed mortality as Conrade? Beſides, when the affair is all over, and you are once got free from this curſed engagement, it will be eaſy, by unravelling the plot, to clear your reputation, and reconcile you to your father into the bargain.

Melanthe. Oh, Florimel, if I was ſure of that!

Florimel. Truſt to Forture. I will lay my life that, if you behave according to my directions, every thing will go right.

Melanthe. Well, then, tell me what I am to do.

Florimel. In the firſt place, when your father comes home, you muſt ſeem to be as well pleaſed with the match as he would have you be; and pretend that you are mightily in love with Conrade's eſtate, whatever you are with the man. Then, as for the old wretch himſelf, you have nothing to do but to ſimper and look ſilly when he makes his addreſſes, and tell him that you are all obedience to your father's will.

Melanthe. This is a hard taſk, and I am a very ill diſſembler; I will try, however, what I can do. But, Florimel, there is one thing that neither you nor I, as yet, have thought upon: ſuppoſe Conrade ſhould take it into his head to watch the door himſelf, and draw upon you in his paſſion?

Florimel. What if he does? I ſhall have a ſword as well as he.

Melanthe. But not underſtand ſo well how to uſe it?

Florimel. I don't know that. But if I can't fight as well, I am ſure I can run much better; ſo pray do not be under any concern on my account.

Theſe fair friends parted not till the night was pretty far advanced; all which time was taken up with ſettling ſome farther particulars in relation to their deſign. Molly, the waiting-maid, was called in; and, after a vow of ſecrecy, entruſted with the whole affair. She ſeemed a good ſmart girl, highly proper for the buſineſs ſhe was to be employed in, and readily promiſed her aſſiſtance. As I was very near as impatient as themſelves for the ſucceſs of this whimſical enterprize, I went every day to Murcio's houſe, and found that Melanthe acted the part ſhe had been taught by Florimel ſo as to give the utmoſt ſatisfaction both to her father and lover; who now talked of nothing but to have the wedding ſolemnized as ſoon as the neceſſary preparations for it could be made.

Saturday being arrived, I made it my buſineſs to enquire whether Murcio was gone to his country-ſeat; and finding he was, and that Melanthe ſtaid at home, concluded this was the day on which the firſt wheel of the machine was to be put in motion; therefore hurried away to the houſe of Conrade, where I luckily came time enough to ſee him receive the letter from Florimel. The

wrinkles

wrinkles of his face were greatly agitated while he was reading this epiſtle. At firſt his eyelids extended themſelves; and his brows were elated with ſurprize, then were contracted into a frown of anger. Sometimes a ſneer of contempt and unbelief lengthened the furrows round his withered lips. But the attitude of longeſt duration, was a penſive hanging down of his head, accompanied with counting the hairs upon his little finger; out of which at laſt he ſtarted, and cried to himſelf—'Many 'reaſons may be urged both for and 'againſt my giving credit to this ſtory; 'but whether built upon truth or ma'lice, I have no need to be at the pains 'of conſidering: the author has pointed 'out the means of being convinced, 'and I will take his counſel.'

As I could not be certain that he would continue in this reſolution, and much leſs ſo, that if he did, what the event of it would be, I went by break of day the next morning, and poſted myſelf over-againſt Murcio's houſe. In a few minutes after Conrade came, wrapped in a cloak; but ſtood more aloof, yet near enough to ſee every thing that paſſed. We had not waited above a quarter of an hour, before the door we watched was ſoftly opened, and a well-dreſſed beau ruſhed out. Conrade advanced as faſt as his gout would let him; in order, I ſuppoſe, to ſee the face of this invader of his hoped-for happineſs: but the pretended gallant was too nimble for his purſuit; but dropped a piece of paper, as if by accident ſtirred out with his handkerchief. Conrade immediately ſnatched it up, and found it was a billet. The ſuperſcription ſeemed to have been torn off, but the contents were theſe—

'DEAREST OF YOUR SEX,

'MY father is gone into the country, 'and I have made an excuſe to 'be left behind. Come at the uſual 'hour, and Molly will admit you to 'the arms of

'Yours.'

I eaſily perceived that this was a ſecond plot of the young ladies to corroborate the firſt; and it had all the effect they could wiſh; and was alſo productive of ſomething elſe, which neither of them at that time imagined, as will appear in the ſucceeding chapter.

CHAP. VII.

IS A CONTINUANCE OF THIS MERRY HISTORY, WHICH PRESENTS SOMETHING AS LITTLE EXPECTED BY THE READER AS IT WAS BY THE PARTIES CONCERNED IN IT.

IT is not to be doubted but that Conrade, after having received this double confirmation of Melanthe's tranſgreſſion, gave over all intentions of becoming her huſband; yet, by what I could gather from his looks, and ſome expreſſions he let fall, the manner in which he ſhould quit his pretenſions was the occaſion of a very great conflict in his mind. He was a good-natured man, and loth to accuſe this young lady to her father; yet, to break off a match ſo far advanced, and which he had ſo earneſtly ſolicited, without aſſigning any cauſe for the change of his reſolution, he thought would not only make him appear ridiculous, but alſo put a final period to all converſation between him and his old friend; and he probably continued undetermined in this matter, till he found himſelf obliged to talk upon it to Murcio himſelf, who had appointed to come to town the next day in order to ſign the marriage writings. That gentleman was at home; and having expected him ſome hours before he came, began, in a pleaſant manner, to reproach his tardineſs; to which Conrade replied, very gravely—'I am indeed, Sir, ſome'what beyond my time, yet, I believe, 'ſoon enough for the buſineſs which 'now brings me.' Murcio ſeemed much ſurprized on hearing him ſpeak in this manner; and poor Melanthe, who was preſent, well knowing that this alteration in her lover's behaviour was the effect of the plot concerted between her and Florimel, trembled for the event, and was no leſs ſhocked at the thoughts how much her innocence ſuffered in his opinion.

It is uncertain what return Murcio would have made, for the other prevented him from ſpeaking, by adding, to what he had ſaid before, that he had ſomething of a very extraordinary nature, and which required no witneſſes, to communicate to him. On which he made a ſign to Melanthe to

to leave the room; and she was no sooner withdrawn, than Conrade proceeded, though not without a good deal of hesitation, to declare himself in these terms—

Conrade. Dear Murcio, we have long been friends; and I should be heartily sorry that what I have to say should occasion a rupture between us. For my own part, there is no man living for whom I shall always preserve a greater esteem than for yourself.

Murcio. I cannot think, Sir, that you have any thing in your mind which should give me reason to regard you less.

Conrade. Reason is too frequently misled by passion. I know it by experience, and shall be glad to find yours is more strong; though, I confess, I have been to blame, and am sorry things have gone so far: but, Sir, I have considered that it is now too late in life for me to think of marriage, especially with so young a lady as Melanthe.

Murcio. This is an odd turn, indeed! Methinks, Sir, you should have considered this before you made any proposals of that sort, either to me or my daughter. A treaty of marriage, Sir, when concluded on and consented to by both parties, is a thing of too much consequence to be broke off by either, without putting the most gross affront upon the other.

Conrade. Not, Sir, when it can be proved that the consummation would be equally inconvenient for both.

Murcio As how for both? My daughter has never made the least objection.

Conrade. It may be so. Yet I am well assured she neither does, nor ever can, regard me with that affection which alone could make either me or herself happy in being united.

Murcio. A mere whim! a caprice of your own, founded only on the disparity of years! and I am amazed you should think of flying off from your engagement on so frivolous a pretence.

Conrade. Perhaps I may have others. Suppose I know she loves another?

Murcio. Sir, I will suppose no such thing. She love another! No, Sir, she has been bred up in principles too virtuous, and is too modest, to place her affections on any one, till my commands, and the authority of the church, made it her duty to do so: and I must tell you, Sir, it is base in you to add to the ill usage you are about to give her, by traducing her reputation.

Conrade. I scorn the unmanly thought. Be assured I have proofs of what I say.

Murcio. Produce them, then.

Conrade. I will, since I find the justification of my own honour depends upon it. There, Sir; read that, and be convinced.

In speaking this, he gave Murcio the letter that had been sent by Florimel; which the other, after having carelessly perused, threw from him; and looking on Conrade with the utmost scorn, said to him—

Murcio. A notable proof, indeed! There are few people without some enemies: but this is a piece of scandal too gross, too stupid, and the invention too ill concerted, to pass even on the most weak and credulous mind; and seems rather a poor, low contrivance, of your own, to evade fulfilling an engagement you have taken it into your head to repent of.

Conrade. You are free in your expressions, Sir; but I believe it will presently be my turn to retort that contempt you so unjustly treat me with. Do you know the hand-writing of your daughter?

Murcio. Yes, certainly I do.

Conrade. Then judge of the contents of this, and take shame to yourself for the injurious treatment you have given me.

The reader will easily imagine that it was Melanthe's little billet he now put into his hands; but no one can conceive, much less am I able to describe, the rage, the horror, the distraction, that shook the whole frame of this astonished parent, on finding himself no longer able to refuse giving credit to so terrible a misfortune. 'Death and furies!' cried he. 'Infamous, abandoned wretch!' Then, after loading her with all the foulest names that language could afford, he turned to Conrade—'Pardon 'me, dear Conrade,' said he. 'Had 'an angel told me what you did, with-'out this cursed testimony, I should 'not have believed the story. But you 'shall have ample satisfaction: I'll turn 'this scandal to my family, this de-'ceiver both of you and me, out of 'my doors this moment; never own 'her, never see her more, but leave her 'to the miseries she merits!' He was running out of the room; and it is probable,

bable, in the first emotions of his passion, would have done as he had threatened, if Conrade had not withheld him; and partly by force, and partly by persuasion, made him sit down, while he reasoned with him in this manner—

Conrade. Dear Murcio, compose yourself; and be not rashly guilty of a thing you hereafter may repent of. Consider that the errors of one branch of a family reflect dishonour on the whole. You have other daughters who, though pure as innocence itself, yet, being of the same blood, may be suspected liable to the same faults; for their sakes, therefore, rather smother than expose the crime of this fair offender.

Murcio. What! would you then have me to forgive, encourage, and suffer her to continue in this shameful prostitution under my own roof!

Conrade. No; but I would have you remember that she is still your child; and that it is your duty, as a father, to use your utmost efforts to retrieve her from perdition, not sink her deeper into it.

Murcio. As how retrieve her! Is she not already lost, irrecoverably lost, to reputation as well as virtue!

Conrade. Not so, I hope. All yet may be well, if her seducer can be prevailed upon to repair the injury he has done her by an honourable marriage.

Murcio. A vain expectation!

Conrade. 'Tis worth attempting, at least. But first you must oblige her to discover the name of this too happy man; for you see that, either by design or accident, the direction to him is torn off the letter.

Murcio. I protest, in the distraction of my thoughts, I had forgot that circumstance; and also to ask you by what means this infamous scrawl came into your possession.

On this Conrade related to him all the particulars he had observed while he had been watching his rival's coming out of the house; and when he had done, in order to encourage Murcio to take the advice he had just given him, added this description of the supposed gallant—

Conrade. I was very much vexed that I had not an opportunity of seeing his face; but his back being towards me, I could only take notice of his dress and air; and do assure you he has all the appearance of a man of fashion, and such a one as to whom you could not reasonably have refused your daughter, even if this accident had never happened.

Murcio. Oh, what a curse it is to have a disobedient child!

He appeared in the most bitter anguish of mind while uttering these last words; but having recovered himself a little, took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following lines to Melanthe—

'Thou Scandal to my Blood and Name!

'THAT you still live to receive 'this, thank the gentleman whom 'you would have wronged by intending 'to carry pollution to his bed. He has 'obtained a reprieve for you on this 'condition, that you declare the name 'and quality of your undoer, to the end 'that I may take such measures as I 'shall judge proper, to oblige him to do 'justice to the honour of a family of 'which you are the only blemish. 'Think not to deny your crime; I have 'the infamous witness of it under your 'own hand: but be plain and open in 'your confession, if you hope ever to 'obtain mercy, either from Heaven or 'your offended father,

'MURCIO.'

After having shewed this to Conrade, he called for the waiting-maid, and bid her give that letter to her mistress, and bring him an immediate answer. I followed, and saw with what agonies poor Melanthe read this cruel mandate. Between the fears of what her father's indignation might inflict upon her, and the shame of appearing guilty of a crime her soul disdained, she was so much overwhelmed, that for some minutes she had not power to speak; and when she did, it was only to utter this exclamation—

Melanthe. What will become of me! Oh this vile plot of Florimel's!

Molly. Lord, Madam, do not put yourself into this flurry! You know your father's temper well enough, and could not expect he would be less severe. But it will be all over; and you must resolve to bear it for a while.

Melanthe. I cannot, will not bear it! I will go down this instant, disclose all, and clear my innocence.

Molly. Sure, Madam, you would not be so mad! What, would you undo all, and be forced to marry Conrade at last?

Melanthe. Was there ever ſo terrible a dilemma! What anſwer can I give?

Molly. Dear Madam, ſay any thing. Tell him you are in love with——— Say any thing but the truth.

Melanthe. How ſilly am I to aſk advice of ſuch a giddy creature!

With this ſhe turned herſelf towards a table whereon ſtood a ſtandiſh, ſat down, paused a while, then began to write; but had ſcarce finiſhed two lines, before ſhe left off, tore the paper, muſed again, and then began afreſh. The ſecond eſſay met with the ſame fate as the former, and ſo did ſeveral ſucceeding ones; till at laſt ſhe threw the pen out of her hand, ſtarted up, and ſaid—

Melanthe. 'Tis in vain to attempt it. I cannot write.

Molly. Why then, Madam, ſay nothing: e'en let him think as he pleaſes, at preſent. If you will but pluck up a ſpirit, we ſhall do well enough. He will not kill you, for his own ſake; and as for any thing elſe, you muſt content yourſelf to ſubmit to it. Nothing can be ſo bad as marrying Conrade. I will go to Florimel preſently: if I am ſo lucky as to find her at home, 'tis ten to one but ſhe puts ſomething into our heads.

Melanthe. Do ſo. I wiſh ſhe were here.

While they were ſpeaking, Murcio called very loud at the bottom of the ſtairs for Molly to come down; on which ſhe ſaid—'Do you hear, Madam? But 'I muſt face the ſtorm, for fear it ſhould 'come hither, and terrify you worſe. I 'wiſh you had as much courage as I 'have.'

She ſaid no more, but ran haſtily down into the parlour; where I, with no leſs ſpeed, attended her footſteps, quite impatient to hear how the pert baggage would behave.

Murcio. What is the reaſon, minx, that I have no anſwer to the letter you carried up?

Molly. Lord, Sir, there was ſomewhat or other in that letter that has frighted my poor lady almoſt out of her wits. She does nothing but cry and wring her hands. It would make your heart ache to ſee her. She write an anſwer! No indeed, ſhe is not in a condition to give an anſwer.

Murcio. If ſhe can't, you muſt, huſſey! Who was that fellow you let out of my houſe yeſterday morning?

Molly. I, Sir! I let out no fellow, not I.

Murcio. 'Tis falſe: my friend here, happening to paſs through the ſtreet at that time, ſaw him come out.

Molly. Why then, Sir, your friend is no better than a pickthank for bringing you ſuch idle ſtories; and I am not afraid to tell him ſo to his face.

Murcio. Was there ever ſuch impudence!

Conrade. Come, come, Mrs. Molly, you had better confeſs the truth; it will be for the good of your lady, and yourſelf too.

Molly. Sir, I ſhall not tell a lye for the matter: I let out no fellow. There was a fine gentleman, indeed, that ſat up all night playing at cards with my lady, that I let out; but no fellow, I aſſure you.

Murcio. Well; and pray, Mrs. Brazenface, what is the name of this fine gentleman?

Molly. Lord, Sir! do you think I know the names of all the gentlemen that come to viſit my lady? Indeed, I am not ſo impertinent as to aſk.

Murcio. No equivocation. Tell me this moment, or I ſhall be your death!

Molly. Bleſs me, Sir! how can you fright a body for nothing? But, if you would be my death twenty times over, I can ſay no more than I have done.

Conrade. Dear Murcio, this girl is not worth the paſſion you are in. I hope the young lady herſelf will ſatisfy you, when once ſhe conſiders how much it is her intereſt to do ſo.

Murcio. Not while ſhe has ſuch a hardened wretch to encourage her obſtinacy.—Huſſey, pack up your trumpery, and get out of my houſe directly, or I ſhall provide a place for you in Bridewell.

Molly. Oh, dear Sir! I ſhall not give you that trouble; there are places enough to be had without your providing.

After ſhe had left the room, and Murcio had vented his paſſion in two or three hearty curſes, he turned to Conrade, and, with a tone of voice which expreſſed the deepeſt trouble of mind, uttered theſe words—'You ſee, my 'dear friend, that both miſtreſs and 'maid are alike incorrigible. What 'now remains for me to do, either to 'preſerve my family from diſgrace, or 'this degenerate girl from everlaſting 'ruin?' The other, who doubtleſs condemned

demned Melanthe more in his heart than he would let her father know he did, could find nothing to say in her defence; but that he hoped, when the first confusion of this discovery was a little over, she would be brought to reason; and therefore intreated he would allow her some time to recollect herself. As the conversation now began to consist only of railings on the one side, and persuasions to moderation on the other, I easily perceived that nothing of importance would be the result; so resolved to leave the two old gentlemen together, and accordingly took the first opportunity to get out of the house.

CHAP. VIII.

PRESENTS SOMETHING WHICH, IF THE AUTHOR'S HOPES DO NOT DECEIVE HIM, WILL AFFORD AN EQUAL SHARE OF SATISFACTION AS SURPRIZE.

BEING very anxious for the situation of poor Melanthe, I fully designed to make another visit to Murcio's house early the next morning; and accordingly got to Murcio's door just as Conrade had alighted from his coach, and was stepping in; so I had an easy access, and followed him up into the dining-room, where Murcio was then sitting, and expressed the satisfaction he took in seeing him in words to this effect—

Murcio. My dear friend, I am glad you are come to give me your opinion in a thing I am about to do. My ungracious daughter has given me no answer, made me no submissions. I cannot keep her in my house; and if I turn her out of it, am in danger of having my whole family scandalized by her behaviour: I am therefore resolved to send her to Cornwall, where I have a near kinsman.

Conrade. I flatter myself, Sir, that the intelligence I bring will save you that trouble, and the young lady so long a journey. I have discovered her favourite lover.

Murcio. Is it possible! For Heaven's sake, who—what is he!

Conrade. One you little suspect, though I have seen him often here. It is Dorimon.

Murcio. Dorimon! Yes, since his return from his travels, he visits here sometimes. His sister Florimel and Melanthe were brought up together at the boarding-school; and, since they left it, have scarcely been two days asunder. But I cannot think Dorimon has been her seducer: she is neither above his hopes, nor below his expectations. If he had any inclinations towards her, I know of nothing should hinder him from making his honourable addresses. But what grounds have you for such a supposition?

Conrade. You shall hear. You know I told you that I did not see his face; but, as I followed him a good part of the street, I took notice of his habit, which indeed had somewhat particular in it, and would have attracted my observation, had I seen it on any other person. It was a dark olive-coloured French barragon, laced with a very rich Point d'Espagne down the seams; he had also a fine flaxen wig, with a bag and a solitaire of an uncommon dimension. I then took him either for a foreigner, or one lately come from abroad. In the same dress, and as exactly as I saw him then, did I see him, within this half hour, at the chocolate-house. I cannot, indeed, swear to the man, but I think may safely to the cloaths, especially as I heard him say, on some gentlemen's praising the suit, and telling him they believed there was not such another in England, that he was pretty sure there was not; for he had bespoke it at Paris, according to his own taste, and it had not been come over long enough for any one to take a pattern by it.

Murcio. I must own there is a strong probability in what you say; but yet, without a certainty, know not what measures I can pursue.

Conrade. If you will take my advice, send for him: I heard him say he should dine at home, so is scarcely gone out. Give some distant hints, at first, concerning a marriage with your daughter; and, according to the answers he makes, you will be instructed how to proceed.

Murcio. It shall be so. I will not let him see I have any suspicion of my daughter's fault; and, whether there be any thing between them or not, a proposal of the nature you mention cannot seem strange to him, as our families have always lived together in a perfect harmony and good understanding.

He had no sooner said this, than he

called a ſervant, and ſent him with his compliments to Dorimon, to let him know he deſired to ſpeak with him immediately, if not otherwiſe engaged. After this, the two friends had ſome farther diſcourſe concerning what ſteps the father of Melanthe ſhould take in this affair; when the fellow who had been ſent on the above meſſage returned, and told his maſter that Dorimon ſaid he would not fail doing himſelf the honour of obeying his commands in a few minutes: on which Conrade took his leave; and Murcio ſat down, endeavouring to frame his temper and countenance ſo as to be ſuitable to the buſineſs he had in hand.

Dorimon appeared in a ſhort time; and, the firſt compliments being paſt, Murcio began to open what he had to ſay, by telling him that he had a great regard for his family; that he was a fine young gentleman; and that, being now five and twenty, he much wondered that he had not heard of his addreſſing ſome lady on the ſcore of marriage. To which Dorimon replied, that marriage was a thing he had not as yet much thought upon; and that, having a ſiſter who took care of his houſe, a wife was the leſs neceſſary to him. Murcio then demanded if he found any averſion in himſelf to changing his condition in favour of a woman of equal birth and fortune, and who would approve of his pretenſions. Dorimon ſeemed a little ſurprized at theſe interrogatories; but anſwered in the negative, with this proviſo, that the perſon of the lady were equally agreeable. Murcio, thinking this reply a proper cue for explaining himſelf, did ſo in the following manner—

Murcio. What think you, then, of my daughter Melanthe?

Dorimon. As of an angel, Sir, above my hopes.

Murcio. No fine ſpeeches, Dorimon; deal ſincerely with me. Do you like her well enough to marry her?

Dorimon. Yes, Sir, upon my ſoul! and ſhould bleſs the hand that gave her to me.

Murcio. Sir, I take you at your word; and give you mine that you ſhall have her, and ſix thouſand pounds, if you think that a ſufficient dower.

Dorimon. I do, Sir; and, though Melanthe is a ſufficient fortune of herſelf, ſhall accept your offer, and make a ſettlement accordingly.

Murcio. Then there remains no more than to get the marriage-articles drawn which, if you pleaſe, ſhall be to-morrow morning.

Dorimon. It cannot be too ſoon. But, Sir, may I not have leave to ſee her, to throw myſelf at her feet, and be aſſured ſhe will not regret the happineſs you beſtow upon me?

Murcio. Oh, Sir, you have nothing to apprehend on that account; for, to be plain with you, I deſigned her for another. She rejected the propoſal, for which ſhe has been under ſome diſgrace: but, as I have ſince diſcovered, her diſobedience was occaſioned by the affection ſhe has for you, I was the more eaſily induced to pardon it. She does not yet know that I conſent to gratify her inclinations: but you ſhall have the pleaſure of telling her yourſelf.

He then went to the door, and ordered a ſervant to bid Melanthe come down: after which he turned back, and ſaid to Dorimon—'My daughter will wait on 'you preſently. I know you will ex-'cuſe my leaving you together: I have 'buſineſs calls me abroad; but expect 'to ſee you to-morrow morning, and 'ſhall have a lawyer here.' He ſaid no more; but went haſtily away, to avoid ſeeing his daughter. He had not left the room above half a minute, before Melanthe entered, but with a confuſion impoſſible to be expreſſed. She had expected no other, on being called down, than to meet ſome terrible effects of her father's diſpleaſure. Her eyes, red with tears, were now caſt down upon the floor, as ſhe advanced with ſlow and trembling ſteps; nor ſaw ſhe who was there, till Dorimon ſprung forward, and took her by the hand with theſe words—

Dorimon. Charming Melanthe, how am I tranſported at the goodneſs of your father! How incapable of expreſſing my gratitude for the permiſſion he has juſt now given me of telling you how much, how truly I adore you!

Melanthe. Bleſs me, Dorimon, what is the meaning of all this! Where is my father?

Dorimon. Gone, to give me the happy opportunity of endeavouring to inſpire you with ſentiments in favour of my paſſion, and conformable to his will.

Melanthe. Your paſſion, and his will! Certainly, Dorimon, you muſt either be mad, or I not in my ſenſes! For Heaven's ſake, explain this myſtery!

He

He was going to reply, when his sister Florimel came tripping in. That young lady having been informed by Molly of all that had passed at Murcio's house, was extremely impatient to know how her fair friend behaved afterwards on that occasion. Melanthe no sooner saw her, than she flew into her arms, and cried—

Melanthe. My dear, dear Florimel, what would I not have given to have seen you last night!

Florimel. I was no less eager to be with you. But I find things have quite changed their face. I met your father at the door as I entered; the old gentleman seems to be in quite good humour, desired me to walk up, and told me I should find you and my brother together.

Dorimon. Aye, my dear sister, we are together; and, I hope, shall soon be joined to separate no more.

Florimel. Separate no more! As how?

Dorimon. By the indissoluble ties of marriage. Murcio, the generous Murcio, has bestowed her on me. To-morrow the articles are to be drawn, and there will then be nothing wanting but my angel's consent for the consummation of my bliss.

Florimel. And was this the business on which he sent for you in such haste?

Dorimon. The same.

Here Florimel burst into so violent a fit of laughter, as rendered her unable to speak for some time. In vain Dorimon asked several times over the cause of this extravagant mirth; and it was but by degrees she recovered herself enough to make this reply—

Florimel. I have found out the riddle! It was I, brother, that have made this match. Yes, with the assistance of that suit of cloaths you have on.

Then addressing herself to Melanthe, proceeded thus—'You must know, 'my dear, that it was Conrade himself 'that watched me coming out of your 'house. I saw him stand perdu under 'Sir Thomas ******'s porch. He has 'certainly seen my brother in these 'cloaths; and, mistaking him for me, 'has passed him upon your father for 'your supposed gallant.' Dorimon was now as much confounded, in his turn, as the two ladies had been in theirs; till his sister, having first obtained Melanthe's leave, related to him the whole history of their contrivance to break the match with Conrade. This repetition occasioned some pleasantry between the brother and sister; but Melanthe was too much ashamed to bear any great part in it. Her new lover observing her seriousness, spoke in this manner—

Dorimon. I have got nothing, Florimel, by the account you have given, but the mortification of that vanity Murcio had inspired me with; and dare not now flatter myself that Melanthe will so readily, as I once hoped, acquiesce in the agreement made between us.

Florimel. If she does not, all will come out; and if so, Murcio will certainly return to his first engagement to give her to Conrade. What say you, Melanthe; have you aversion enough for my brother to run so great a risque?

This demand made Melanthe blush excessively. She paused, and hung down her head; but at last made this return—'So sudden a change in my for-'tune might well excuse me from 'giving a direct answer to such a ques-'tion. Of this, however, you may be 'assured, that I have not courage to 'disobey my father a second time, and 'that I love the sister too well to have 'any aversion to the brother.'

On this Dorimon kissed her hand with a great deal of warmth, and said many tender and passionate things to her; which, as the reader will easily conceive, I think it needless to repeat; and shall only add that, between the brother and the sister, Melanthe was at last prevailed upon to confess, that it would be without the least reluctance she should obey her father in the choice he had now made for her. Though there was now little cause to apprehend any disappointment in these nuptials, yet I resolved to see the thing fully concluded on; accordingly I went the next morning to Murcio's house, where I found him very busy with his lawyer. Dorimon came in soon after; and the writings were presently filled up, signed, sealed, and duly executed, by both parties: and the lawyer had no sooner left the room, than Murcio spoke to Dorimon in these terms—

Murcio. Well, Dorimon, I think there is nothing now wanting for the making you my son, except the ceremony of the church; and I don't care how soon that also was performed. I

do

do not love to see affairs of this nature kept long in hand. Besides, you must know, that on my daughter's refusing to marry the person I first proposed to her, I swore in my passion that I would never see her face again till she was a wife.

Dorimon. You may be assured, Sir, I shall think every moment an age; and I do not doubt but the knowledge of the vow you have made will very much expedite my wishes.

Murcio. I am going directly to my little country-seat, and shall leave you to consult with her about the day; but will write to the rector of ****, who is my kinsman, and desire he will perform the office: when that is over, would have you both come down to *****, where you may depend upon meeting with a fatherly reception.

Nothing farther, of any consequence, was said by either of them. Murcio took coach for the country, and Dorimon went to the apartment of his mistress; where strenuously pressing her for the speedy consummation of his happiness, her father's pretended vow served as an excuse for her compliance, and she consented that the wedding should be the next Sunday after. No accident retarded the fulfilling this agreement, and they were married on the day appointed; after which they set out, accompanied by Florimel, for *****, to receive the blessing Murcio had promised to bestow upon them. As no one of the company had any reason to be discontented at what had happened, it is not to be doubted but the goddess of chearfulness accompanied them in their little journey: I say journey, because the sister of Dorimon having an aversion to the water, they went in a landau, in complaisance to her; but the subject of their conversation is not in my power to relate, as I had no opportunity of being witness of it.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINS A SUCCINCT ACCOUNT OF SOME FARTHER PARTICULARS, IN SOME MEASURE RELATIVE TO THE FOREGOING ADVENTURE.

HAVING married my two new-made lovers, the reader will possibly imagine, that the last act of the play is ended, and that I should now drop the curtain, to prepare for some fresh subject of entertainment; but he must wait awhile; I have not yet done with any of my characters: and besides, as there are many things which seem to require a farther explanation, I cannot think of parting with my favourite Florimel, without giving her those just praises which her wit and good-humour may justly claim. It is not unlikely, indeed, but that there may be some over-scrupulous ladies in the world, who will be so far from approving the character of this charming girl, that they will highly contemn her for assuming the air and habit of a man, though for never so short a space of time; and even rail at Melanthe, for consenting to put in execution the stratagem she had contrived for her deliverance from an evil so justly dreaded by her. Such as these will certainly think I have said enough, if not too much, on the occasion; and perhaps throw aside the book, and cry they will read no farther. Well, be it so; the lots will be entirely their own: I am pretty confident neither my reputation, nor the profits of my publisher, will suffer by their ill-nature in this point. It is for the entertainment of the gay, the witty, and truly virtuous—who, by the way, are never censorious—that these lucubrations are chiefly intended; and if I am so fortunate as to please them, should give myself no great pain what may be said of me by those of the abovementioned class. In defiance, therefore, of these fair, or rather unfair criticks, I shall proceed in what I have farther to relate concerning the principal subjects of this narrative.

On their arrival at *****, they were received by Murcio with a shew of the greatest satisfaction; yet I, who took care to be there before them, in order to be witness of what should pass at this first interview, could easily perceive that he embraced his son-in-law with more cordiality and less constraint than he did his daughter. The remembrance of her supposed fault doubtless rendered him unable to treat her with his accustomed tenderness: he scarce touched her cheek in saluting her; and when he gave her his blessing, added—'Pray Heaven 'your future conduct may deserve it!' It could not be otherwise, but that all the company must comprehend the full meaning of these words: but poor Melanthe

Ianthe was so much affected by them, that she burst into a flood of tears; and throwing herself a second time at her father's feet, addressed him in these pathetick terms—

Melanthe. Oh, Sir, I beg, I beseech you, by all the love you once had for me, to forgive the only act of disobedience I was ever guilty of; pardon but the aversion I had to the match you first proposed to me, and you will easily absolve the rest.

Dorimon. Yes, Sir, my dear, my charming wife, is as innocent of every thing that can deserve your blame, as I am from even the most distant wish of violating her purity, or dishonouring your family.

Florimel. Aye, aye, it is poor me that am alone in fault; but, since the mischief I have done has been productive of so much good, I scarce doubt of being excused by a gentleman of so much good sense as Murcio. I have delivered your daughter, Sir, by my contrivance, from the horrors of a forced marriage; I have procured a wife for my brother, with whom, if he is not the most happy, I am certain he deserves to be the most miserable, of all mankind; and I have got you a son-in-law, who I hope will merit that honour by his future behaviour.

Murcio, who could not form even the most distant guess at the meaning of all this, looked sometimes on the one, and sometimes on the other, with all the tokens of the utmost amazement, without being able to speak one syllable; which gave Florimel the opportunity of unravelling the whole mystery of the affair, as she had before promised Melanthe to take upon herself to do. In spite of the little resentment Murcio at first conceived for the trick that had been put upon him, he could not forbear smiling at the invention of the contriver; and the wit and spirit with which that young lady talked to him upon it, very much contributed to bring him into good humour: but that which entirely reconciled him to the wedded pair was, the consideration that Dorimon was wholly ignorant of the plot till after the marriage was concluded; and the assurance Melanthe gave him, that she was far from any intention to deceive him, but had flattered herself with the hope that Conrade would have broke the engagement without mentioning to him the reasons he had for doing so. Though to have married his daughter to Conrade would have saved him six thousand pounds, yet the many ill consequences which would probably have attended so disproportionate a match, now occurring to his mind, which before he had not thought upon, made him not only contented, but rejoiced, that this change of hands had happened; and he could not forbear kissing and hugging Florimel for being the chief author of it.

Every one now endeavouring to outvie the other in giving testimonies of his good-humour, among the many gay and gallant things said by Dorimon on this occasion, he protested to keep his French cloaths as long as he lived, for a perpetual memento of the good they had done for him, and never wear them but on the anniversary of that happy day which gave his dear Melanthe to his arms. On falling afterwards into some discourse concerning the oddness of the accident which had brought about a marriage so little thought of by either of the parties, yet so agreeable to both, as well as to their friends, Murcio expressed himself in this manner—

Murcio. I cannot help thinking that there is something peculiarly remarkable in this transaction, and looks as if the hand of Heaven had directed the accomplishment.

Florimel. I dare almost engage my own life for the mutual happiness of theirs. Their humours are so exactly suited to each other, that neither of them are fit for any body else; and, now I consider on it, am amazed that, in the long acquaintance they had together, this business never came into either of their heads till chance put it there.

Dorimon. Nay, sister, I am now convinced, by the transport and the pleasing flutter at my heart, on the offer Murcio made of his daughter, that I was then passionately in love with her, though without knowing it.

Melanthe. And if you had been as indifferent to me, as I then thought you were, I should not certainly have been so soon and so easily persuaded to be yours.

Murcio. Well, all things have happened for the best; and there is nothing now wanting to compleat my satisfaction,

tion, but the clearing up Melanthe's innocence to Conrade. I ſhould be glad he were here.

The word was ſcarce out of his mouth, when a ſervant came into the room, and informed him, that the perſon he had mentioned was below; on which he ordered he ſhould be immediately introduced. The old gentleman, who had heard nothing of what had happened, nor ſeen Murcio ſince the converſation with him, repeated in a former chapter, had been impatient to know the ſucceſs of his propoſal to Dorimon; and finding he did not return to town as uſual, made him this viſit at *****, in order to gratify his curioſity. He had not advanced above half way into the room, when Murcio preſented the bride and bridegroom to him; and told him he had been juſt wiſhing for him to congratulate the nuptials. Conrade endeavoured to compoſe himſelf enough to ſalute them with the accuſtomed forms; but as he had not in his heart believed that Dorimon would be prevailed upon to marry Melanthe, though he had adviſed her father to make the experiment, was ſo much ſurprized on finding the affair concluded, that he could not forbear teſtifying it in his looks, as well as by crying out—

Conrade. What, married!

Florimel. Yes, Sir, they are married: the indiſſoluble knot is tied; for which all due thanks be given to your fortunate miſtake.

Conrade. My miſtake, Madam! Pardon me, if I do not comprehend your meaning.

Dorimon. I believe you do not, Sir: yet it is to your miſtaking another for me, that I am indebted for being put in poſſeſſion of a happineſs which otherwiſe I muſt have ſolicited for a long ſeries of time, and perhaps at laſt never have obtained. I do aſſure you, Sir, I never preſumed to entertain one wiſh to the diſhonour of Melanthe; and was ſleeping in my own bed when you imagined me juſt riſen from her arms.

Murcio He tell you nothing but the truth He is innocent, ſo is Melanthe. But here ſtands her gallant; here is the author of this enigma.

In concluding theſe words, which he had uttered with the moſt chearful air, he patted Florimel upon her cheek, and gently puſhed her towards Conrade: but that gentleman was now in ſuch a conſternation, that he ſcarce knew where he was, much leſs had the power of diſtinguiſhing the ſenſe of any thing he either ſaw or heard; till Florimel related to him, in her ſprightly faſhion, every particular of that ſtratagem which had occaſioned the breaking off the intended match between him and Melanthe. Murcio alſo, and Dorimon, averring the truth of what ſhe ſaid, he began at laſt to ſee clearly into the whole affair; after which Melanthe, with a great deal of modeſty and ſweetneſs, addreſſed herſelf to him in theſe terms—

Melanthe. I hope, Sir, you will pardon the deception put upon you, as I was conſtrained to purſue ſo extraordinary a method, to avoid a thing which, in the end, muſt have been no leſs diſagreeable to you than to myſelf. I ſhall always acknowledge my obligation to the generous offer your affection made: but love, Sir, is not in our power; if it were, my gratitude to you, the conſideration of my own intereſt, and the duty owing to my father, would certainly have inſpired me with it.

Conrade. Say no more, ſweet lady. I am aſhamed of my paſt folly; and only wiſh you would exert all the influence you have over your witty ſhe-gallant, not to expoſe this ſtory in print. I ſhould be ſorry, methinks, to ſee myſelf in a novel or play.

Florimel. No, no, Sir; you need be under no apprehenſions on that ſcore. I would not, for my own ſake, have the world know I put on breeches; leſt my huſband, when I get one, ſhould be afraid I would attempt to wear them afterwards.

This reply of Florimel's ſet the whole company into a fit of laughter, and would doubtleſs have been the occaſion of many pleaſant repartees, if the butler had not that inſtant given them a ſummons to the next room, where was a table elegantly ſpread with every thing ſuitable to the ſeaſon. But, as I could not partake of any of the delicacies I ſaw before me, I thought it beſt to leave the houſe; ſo accordingly I ſlipped out, plucked off my belt, went into a boat and ordered the waterman to row as faſt as poſſible to London; where being arrived, I contented myſelf with ſuch fare as my own homely board afforded. Not many weeks had this adventure elapſed, before I heard that Florimel was married to a young gentleman

gentleman whom for ſeveral years ſhe had loved, and by whom ſhe was equally beloved. My inſatiate curioſity, on this information, led me to enquire into the hidden cauſe which had ſo long delayed the completion of their mutual wiſhes; and, by ways and means too tedious to be here inſerted, I at laſt diſcovered it to be ſuch as attracted my higheſt eſteem and admiration.

Dorimon had been a little extravagant in his equipage and way of living while on his travels. Her whole fortune lay in his hands; and if called out, which in all probability would have been the caſe if ſhe had married, he muſt have been obliged to mortgage ſome part of his eſtate for the payment. It was therefore to ſave her brother from ſo great an inconvenience, that this generous young lady had been deaf to all the ſolicitations of a beloved lover, and the ſoft pleadings of her own heart, till Melanthe's fortune coming into the family, removed the only impediment to her wiſhes. Thus, by the moſt unſeen, undreamt-of means, does Providence diſpoſe every thing for the advantage of it's favourites. Florimel, by her wit, and contrivance to ſerve her fair friend, without propoſing the leaſt intereſt to herſelf, or even imagining ſhe could have any, not only brought about her brother's happineſs, but met her own reward, in the accompliſhment of her felicity. Theſe two families live together in the moſt perfect harmony; and Murcio, who is little leſs fond of Florimel than of his own daughter, paſſes moſt of his time among them. Conrade alſo is extremely intimate with both; inſomuch that it is thought he will, at his deceaſe, divide a good part of his large fortune between them.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

IS A KIND OF WARNING-BELL TO THE PUBLICK, AND GIVES A MELANCHOLY, THOUGH TOO COMMON PROOF, THAT A PERSON IN ENDEAVOURING, BY UNJUST OR IMPRUDENT MEASURES, TO AVOID FALLING INTO AN IMAGINARY MISFORTUNE, IS FREQUENTLY LIABLE TO BRING ON EFFECTUALLY WHAT MIGHT OTHERWISE NEVER HAVE HAPPENED.

OF all the paſſions which diſtract the human mind, there is none more pernicious in it's quality, nor more dreadful in it's conſequences, than jealouſy. It is looked upon, indeed, as the moſt certain proof of a ſtrong and violent affection; yet it is ſuch a proof as no one would wiſh to experience, as it infallibly involves the beloved object in a variety of diſquiets, whether innocent or guilty: nor is the perſon poſſeſſed of this raging fury leſs wretched; ſo juſt are theſe words of Mr. Dryden—

'O jealouſy! thou raging ill,
'Why haſt thou found a place in lover's
'hearts?
'Afflicting what thou canſt not kill,
'And poiſoning Love himſelf with his own
'darts.'

And as the inimitable Shakeſpeare yet more emphatically, in my opinion, expreſſes it—

'O what damn'd minutes tells he o'er,
'Who doats, yet doubts; ſuſpects, yet ſtrong-
'ly loves!'

But as jealouſy frequently takes poſſeſſion of the ſoul by almoſt imperceptible degrees, the following little narrative may ſerve as an antidote againſt it's poiſon; and warn every one, married perſons eſpecially, not to give way to it's firſt attacks, leſt it ſhould be in time wholly ſubdued by it.

Cleora had from her very infancy been promiſed in marriage to the ſon of a neighbouring gentleman, about three years older than herſelf. An inclination for her intended huſband grew up with her years; nor was his affection leſs tender for her, whom he expected would one day be his wife: but when the innocent

nocent pair became ripe for the consummation of their mutual wishes, an unhappy dispute happened between their parents, which entirely broke off the match at once, and they were forbid to see each other any more. As I was not at that time acquainted with either of the lovers, I cannot pretend to describe what their young hearts sustained in this cruel separation: it was doubtless very grievous to them both at first; but absence, and variety of amusements, provided for them by their respective parents, in order to dissipate their chagrin, by degrees wrought the desired effects. Leander, for so he was called, grew one of the gayest men about the town; and Cleora was so far weaned from the remembrance of him, that she obeyed her father without reluctance in receiving the addresses of Aristus; who, after the necessary forms of courtship, became her husband.

Few nuptials gave a greater promise of felicity. The births, the fortunes, of the wedded pair, were equal; their ages perfectly agreeable: she was not quite nineteen, and he no more than five and twenty; she was a very lovely woman he a most graceful man. He had adored her to so romantick a height, that it was thought, if he had not obtained her, a dagger or a bowl of poison must have been his fate. She treated him with all the tenderness that could be expected from a virtuous woman by a reasonable man. They were, in the first months of their marriage, the envy and admiration of as many as knew them. But, alas! how uncertain is the date of human happiness! When Heaven is not pleased to bestow on us a contented mind; I mean, when we do not ask that blessing, and endeavour to acquire it; in vain indulgent Fortune lavishes her whole stock of bounties on us; we repine amidst our plenty, enjoy nothing we possess, and are wretches because we will be so.

The bridal house, so lately the theatre of joy and pleasure, soon became the cell of gloomy sullenness and black despair. The eyes of the beautiful Cleora were frequently seen red with weeping: she ceased to appear at any publick place, and received very little company at home; while on the brow of the once chearful, gay Aristus, now loured a heavy melancholy, and all the indications of a deep inward grief. Every one saw the change, but none could presently discern the cause: it could not, however, long be kept a secret; the servants who waited immediately on their persons were the first who discovered it; these reported it to the others, and they failed not to whisper it to as many as they were acquainted with—that their master was prodigiously jealous of his lady.

The first tokens he gave of this frenzy, as I have been since informed, was to debar Cleora from going to the opera, the play, the masquerade, and all routs and assemblies; all which places she had been accustomed to frequent. She obeyed him, notwithstanding, without murmuring or repining; and told him, with a great deal of sweetness, that if those diversions were infinitely dearer to her than ever they had been, she would readily sacrifice all the pleasure she took in them to that of testifying her love and duty to him. Not contented with this, he proceeded farther, and forbade her to make any visits without him, except to his mother, who lived but in the next street; and then to let him know, that he might meet her there, and bring her home. Hard as this injunction seemed to her, she complied with it; being resolved, if possible, to chace from his mind all those ideas she found he had conceived in prejudice of her discretion, and convince him that she regarded nothing so much as his satisfaction.

What more could woman do, or man expect? yet all was not enough to make this jealous husband easy. Whenever they were abroad together, if any gentleman happened to be in company, the least gallant thing said to her, or complaisance returned to it by her, immediately set the worm within his brain a madding, and made him, on their coming home, reproach her in terms very unbecoming in him to make use of, and difficult for her to bear with patience: yet, nevertheless, he still loved her, loved her to an excess; but, as the poet says—

'No signs of love in jealous men remain,
'But that which sick men have of life,
'their pain.'

This behaviour of Aristus engrossed much of the conversation of the town, and various were the conjectures passed

upon it. Some highly blamed him; others were apt to imagine there had really been some imprudences on the part of Cleora; and not a few there were among her own sex, who, hating her for those very perfections which ought to have excited their esteem, scrupled not to pronounce her guilty of every thing she could be suspected of.

Much was this lady to be pitied. Deprived of all those pleasures to which her youth had been accustomed, ill-treated by her husband, censured by her acquaintance, and secluded from the society of those who might have found means of diverting, if not wholly dissipating her melancholy. To add to her misfortunes, she had no friend near her to whom she might complain. Her father, being a widower, had broke up house-keeping soon after her marriage, and was retired, with an intent to pass the remainder of his days with her elder sister, who was settled in a far distant county; so that the only person from whom she received any consolation was Miss Lucia, the sister of Aristus, a young lady of great good-nature, and who believing her truly innocent, used her utmost endeavours to put all chimeras to her prejudice out of her brother's head.

The discourses which continually filled my ears about this family, and the different opinions the world had of the manner of their living together, made me resolve to have recourse to my Invisibility, in order to discover which was in the right. Accordingly, I went one day, equipped as usual, with my Belt and Tablet, to make a visit at their house. Aristus was abroad; but I found Cleora, sitting in a very pensive posture, in her dressing-room. I had not been there above two minutes, before her footman came in, and presented her with a letter, which he told her was left for her by a porter, who said it required no answer, and was gone.

I must confess that, on hearing this, I was guilty of great injustice to Cleora, and began to be apprehensive that her husband's suspicions were founded on too solid reasons; but I was soon ashamed of my rash judgment, when, slipping behind her chair, and looking over her shoulder as she read, I perceived the letter was from Miss Lucia, and contained these lines—

'DEAR SISTER,

'WORDS cannot express how greatly I am troubled, on finding myself obliged to send this, instead of waiting on you in person. Be assured I love and value your conversation as I ought; and shall no less suffer in being deprived of it, Heaven knows for how long a time, than you will do in the knowledge of the cause. Some idle stories, of which, I dare believe, my brother's unhappy caprice has been the sole occasion, have reached the ears of my mamma, and made her think it improper for me to be seen with you, while the world continues to judge of you in the manner it does at present. She heard of your message to me, and strictly forbade me to obey the summons. You know too well, my dear Cleora, what duty is owing from a child to a parent, and also how much my father's will has left me in her power, to resent the painful proof I now give of my obedience to her. I wish, for my own sake, as well as yours, that she, my brother, and every one that knows us, were as well convinced as myself of your perfect innocence; but, till that happy time arrives, must content myself with the memory of the many happy hours we have passed together, and the hopes of many more yet to come, when once the horrid cloud which now separates us is removed. Farewel! That Heaven may send you comfort under your present affliction, and speedily relieve you from it, shall be the constant prayers of her who is, with the greatest sincerity, your most affectionate sister,

'LUCIA.'

Scarce had she gone through half this epistle, before her countenance betrayed the effect it produced. Disdain, rage, grief, seemed now to have united all their force to raise a tempest in her mind; which immediately broke forth in these and the like exclamations—'Deprived of my poor Lucia, too, and on so shocking a pretence! Good Heaven! for what unknown crime of mine, or of my ancestors, am I linked into such a family! Mother and son alike unjust, ungrateful, base, tyrannick! Have I renounced all the gay amusements of life, submitted my temper to

'the

'the will of an imperious husband, and 'made it my whole study to oblige him, 'to meet at last with this ungenerous, 'this barbarous return! My virtue su-'spected, my reputation traduced, and 'my conversation shunned as a dis-'grace! Oh, 'tis too much—too much 'for human patience to sustain!'

Many other expressions of the same nature did her passion vent; till, at last, recollecting the request Lucia had made in the postscript of her letter, she snatched it hastily from off her toilet, and thrust it into the fire; saying, at the same time, 'Poor Lucia, however, must not suffer 'for her friendship to me.'

Aristus being returned home, was that instant coming up stairs; which being opposite to the room where Cleora was, and the door open, he had an opportunity of seeing this last action, though not of hearing the words which accompanied it. He flew like lightning to the chimney, in order to save the paper, not doubting but it contained something that might add fresh fuel to his jealousy; but, nimble as he was, the flames were yet more quick, and left not the least part of what he so much wanted unconsumed. This disappointment, joined with what he had seen Cleora do, so much inflamed him, that looking on her with eyes sparkling with indignation, he saluted her with this reproach—

Aristus. I perceive, Madam, you will be still too cunning for me. Had I come a moment sooner, I might, perhaps, have discovered enough in that paper, to have silenced all your future boastings of virtue and fidelity.

Cleora. Oh, Sir, you need be under no apprehensions on that score. The continuance of your base suspicions deserve not that I should be at any pains to undeceive you.

Aristus. No, 'twould be in vain: too well I know you. Nor can you, dare you, now attempt to justify yourself, after the glaring proof I have received of your infidelity.

Cleora. What proof?

Aristus. That paper, perfidious woman!—that paper, whose ashes, could they speak, would rise up in judgment against you.

Cleora. This is madness, or some new pretext to use me ill. Pray, what can the most injurious of your imaginations suggest on the burning of a bit of paper?

Aristus. Did I not observe your countenance while throwing the lewd scrawl into the fire? Did not your gloating eyes pursue it as you would the fellow from whom it came? Were not all the marks of guilt and confusion on your cheeks on my approach? But this is not all: I was told below that you had just received a letter by a porter. Answer to that, thou hypocrite! Does it become a married woman, of your rank and circumstances, to receive letters, brought by such messengers?

Cleora. A married woman! say rather a married wretch! for such are all who have husbands like Aristus.

Aristus. Still you evade the question; but, if you would not deserve to be the wretch you call yourself, be once sincere, and tell me from which of your pretended admirers that letter came.

Cleora. From none.

Aristus. Perhaps, then, some female agents, some sly promoters of your amorous intrigues. But no equivocations: explain the whole, or, by Heaven, my sword——

Cleora. Do! kill me! it is the only act of kindness you can shew, and all I now wish to receive from you.

Aristus. So daring in your crimes, abandoned creature! But get out of my sight this moment, lest I be indeed provoked to do a deed I might hereafter repent of.

Cleora. Monster!—But to quit your presence is a command I shall always be ready to obey.

It was with an unspeakable haughtiness that Cleora uttered these words as she flung out of the room. I am apt to believe, by the amazement Aristus now appeared in, that this was the first time she had ever testified any great marks of resentment for his ill treatment of her. He stood for some moments in a profound reverie; and, when he came out of it, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, saying—'Good God! nothing 'but the most perfect innocence, or the 'most consummate guilt, could inspire 'a woman with so much boldness. 'I know not what to think.' Then folding his arms, again seemed lost in meditation; which having indulged a while, the subject of it burst out in these words—'If she were innocent, where-

'fore

'fore ſhould ſhe conceal from me the 'contents of that curſed letter? No, 'tis too plain ſhe is guilty. In vain 'would my fond heart, that ſtill doats 'on her, find excuſes for her behaviour. 'Yet it would be ſome eaſe to be con-'vinced: but it is impoſſible; ſhe has 'too much art. How true, O Dryden, 'are thy words—

"Falſe women to new joys unſeen can
"move;
"There are no prints left in the paths of
"love.
"All other goods by publick marks are
"known;
"But this, we moſt deſire to keep, has
"none."

After this, he walked ſeveral times backwards and forwards in the room, then ran haſtily down ſtairs, as I imagined, in ſearch of Cleora; but finding he did not, and went out of the houſe, I alſo left it too, having an engagement of my own that evening.

CHAP. II.

IN WHICH THE READER IS REQUESTED TO EXPECT NO MORE THAN A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME NARRATIVE BEGUN IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

THE diſtreſs in which I left Cleora, and the knowledge I now had of her innocence very much affected me; and I muſt either have changed my nature, or have loſt that happy gift of Inviſibility which enabled me to diſcover almoſt every thing, not to have flown the next morning to the houſe of Ariſtus, in order to inform myſelf what effects the converſation of the preceding night had produced. I truly pitied the unhappy pair: for though Ariſtus was unjuſt and cruel in his ſuſpicions, yet I plainly ſaw he ſuffered no leſs in his own mind than what he inflicted on his much-injured wife; eſpecially when I reflected that he was not guilty through a want of affection for her but a too violent exceſs of it; as is obſerved by one of our beſt Engliſh poets—

'The greater care the higher paſſion ſhews,
'We hold that deareſt we moſt fear to
'loſe.'

Indeed I ſoon found, how much more than I could even have imagined this offending huſband deſerved my commiſeration. He was abroad, and Cleora not yet riſen from her bed, when I made my viſit; which, as near as I can remember, was ſomewhat paſt eleven o'clock. Reſolved, however, not to loſe my labour entirely, I had recourſe for intelligence to the tatlers of the kitchen; whom, according to my wiſh, I found buſy in diſcourſe on the very point I wanted. Some took the part of their maſter, ſome of their lady: and, upon the whole, I found, that a ſecond quarrel having enſued after Ariſtus came home, Cleora had refuſed either to ſup or ſleep with him, but lay in a bed ſhe had ordered to be prepared for her in another room; on which he went not to his own, but had continued the whole night walking about the houſe, and behaved like a man totally deprived of reaſon; and that, when morning came, he went out.

On a ſudden, hearing the footman ſay that his maſter knocked at the ſtreet-door, I followed as faſt as I could; being more curious to ſee how Ariſtus would behave, than to hear what would be the iſſue of the conteſt between the ſervants. Accordingly I got cloſe in the corner of an arch while he paſſed by, and could ſee nothing in his countenance of that ferocity the ſervants had been deſcribing; on the contrary, a perfect compoſure ſeemed to me to ſit upon all his features, and left not the leaſt traces of diſſatisfaction. I attended him to the chamber which Cleora had made choice of for her repoſe, if it were poſſible for her to take any, the preceding night. He knocked gently at the door; but finding it not readily opened, retired, and went into the dining-room; where he called a ſervant, and bid him ſeek his wife's waiting-maid, and order her to come immediately to him. The young woman preſently appeared; though, I eaſily diſcerned, not without ſome tremor of the nerves; expecting, perhaps, to participate in the effects of her maſter's diſpleaſure: her countenance, however, grew more aſſured, when he ſpoke in the moſt courteous accents, ſaying—

Ariſtus. Is your lady awake yet, Mrs. Betty?

Waiting-maid. Yes, Sir.

Ariſtus. Then let her know I am ready

ready for breakfaſt; and aſk if ſhe will have the tea ſerved where ſhe is, or in her own dreſſing-room, as uſual.

She ſaid no more; and, after making a low curtſey, went out of the room, very much ſurprized at this ſudden turn; as indeed was I, after what I had ſeen and heard; nor was able to determine, as yet, whether the extraordinary complaiſance he ſhewed was real or affected. I was ſoon convinced, however, when the maid returned with this anſwer to his meſſage—

Waiting-maid. Sir, my lady deſires to be excuſed. She has got a violent head-ache, and begs not to be diſturbed.

Ariſtus. Tell her I bring her news that will make her well. No—hold—I will go myſelf.

With theſe laſt words he flew to the chamber; and, puſhing open the door, which was now unlocked, found his wife ſitting in a very melancholy and dejected poſture. She ſtarted up at ſight of him; and, without giving him leave to ſpeak, accoſted him in theſe terms—

Cleora. 'Tis hard that no part of a houſe, of which I am flattered with the name of miſtreſs, can protect me from the inſults of a man who certainly married me with no other view than to make me miſerable.

Ariſtus. Oh, ſay not ſo! I will ſoon convince you to the contrary; nor ſhall you ever more have cauſe to fly the preſence of Ariſtus. I own I have been to blame; have ſaid and done a thouſand things that I am aſhamed to think of. But why, my dear Cleora, did you raiſe my paſſion to that guilty height? Why conceal from me the author and contents of the letter which gave me ſo much pain?

Cleora. It would be eaſy for me to juſtify my refuſal.

Ariſtus. I know it would, my angel; full well I know it would: but I am now let into the ſecret, without your being guilty of a breach of friendſhip to oblige me.

Cleora. What is it you mean, Ariſtus?

Ariſtus. I have been this morning at my mother's; where, ſpeaking of our unhappy quarrel, and the motive of it, my ſiſter immediately changed countenance; and, after vindicating your conduct with the utmoſt vehemence, and as ſeverely condemning mine, confeſſed that it was herſelf that had ſent that letter to you by a porter, and had deſired you to burn it as ſoon as read.

Cleora. Dear Lucia! Oh that the brother had the ſiſter's temper!

Ariſtus. Brother and ſiſter are equally devoted to you. If Lucia were Ariſtus, ſhe would do as Ariſtus does; and if Ariſtus were Lucia, he would act like Lucia. The difference of ſexes makes all the difference in our ſentiments or behaviour. Her's is a tender friendſhip, mine a raging love; which, while happy in your poſſeſſion, trembles at even the moſt diſtant poſſibility of ever being leſs ſo.

Cleora. Can it be love that ſuſpects my virtue?

Ariſtus. By Heaven! my cooler moments have never ſet you down as capable of wronging me, or of diſhonouring yourſelf; but when paſſion rages in the ſoul, reaſon has little government over our thoughts or words. I know I have been much to blame; but, O Cleora! forgive a fault occaſioned only by an exceſs of fondneſs. So dear I prize you, that I envy the very air that breathes upon your lips; and wiſh to grow for ever there, and keep out all intruders.

Cleora. But do you conſider how wretched this cauſeleſs jealouſy has made me?

Ariſtus. Yes, and could tear out my heart for having ever harboured the leaſt unjuſt ſuſpicion of you; yet have I ſuffered torments much greater than was in my power to inflict. Could you be ſenſible of the agonies I felt during this laſt whole cruel night, you muſt, you would forgive and pity me.

Cleora. Mine have not been leſs; yet could I forget all, had my reputation been untouched by your ill-uſage. You now know the purport of your ſiſter's letter; and can you think it poſſible for me to ſupport, with patience, the being looked upon by your kindred as a diſgrace to the family I am come among?

Ariſtus. Think not ſo, my dear Cleora. My ſiſter was always aſſured of your innocence, and a ſtrenuous vindicator of every thing you did. My mother never thought worſe than that ſome little inadvertencies in your conduct had wrought me up to the follies I have been guilty of, which ſhe has juſt now ſe-

verely

verely chid me for. They will both wait on you this afternoon, and give you all the proofs in their power of the ſincere reſpect and tenderneſs they have for you.

Cleora. Well, Ariſtus, if I could be certain that this was the laſt trial you would make of my good-nature, I might, perhaps, endeavour to think no more on what is paſt.

Ariſtus. If ever I fall back into my former errors, deſpiſe me, hate me, think me the worſt of men. No, be aſſured I am too much aſhamed of what I have been, ever to be the like again; and, as a proof of the perfect confidence I now have in you, henceforward keep what company you pleaſe. I ſhall preſcribe no rules for your conduct; I ſhall leave all to yourſelf, and be ſatisfied that all you do is right.

Cleora. I ſhall take the leſs liberty for your granting me ſo much. But, if you ſhould relapſe, remember what a certain celebrated author of our ſex ſays on this occaſion—

'We women to ourſelves this juſtice owe,
'That thoſe who think us falſe, ſhould
'find us ſo.'

She ſpoke this with ſo enchanting a ſmile, that Ariſtus, though not yet quite ſure that what he did would be agreeable, could not forbear catching her in his arms, and holding her for ſome time locked in the moſt ſtrict embrace; then letting her looſe, and looking on her with the extremeſt tenderneſs, cried—

Ariſtus. Do you then forgive me?

Cleora. I do.

With theſe words, ſhe threw her ſnowy arms about his neck, and put her face cloſe to his, returning all the endearments he had juſt before given her; after which, that is, as ſoon as the tranſport he was in would give him leave to ſpeak, he ſaid—

Ariſtus. My for ever adored Cleora, depend upon it, that the whole ſtudy of my life ſhall be to requite this goodneſs.

Cleora. Treat me but as my actions deſerve; I aſk no more. But come, let us go to breakfaſt.

With this they went arm in arm into the next room, where Mrs. Betty and the tea-equipage waited their approach. I now left this once more happy pair to enjoy the ſweets of their reconciliation; and, as I doubted not but the contrition of Ariſtus would be as laſting, as by many indications I had reaſon to think it was ſincere, expected not that any future events, worthy the attention of an Inviſible Spy, would happen to call me to their houſe again. But, unhappily for the perſons concerned in it, a very few days after convinced me how little I was endowed with the ſpirit of prophecy; and alſo, that when once the fatal fire of jealouſy has got poſſeſſion of the mind, though it may lie dormant for a while, yet the leaſt wafting of a feather, or even a ſhadow, is ſufficient to give it motion, and kindle the ſmothered embers into a blaze.

I was loitering one morning in the Park. The air was ſerene, and not cold, the time of the year conſidered; for it was then November. Few people being there, I had an opportunity of indulging contemplation with the wonders of nature; which, even in the moſt barren ſeaſon, affords matter to attract our admiration; and was almoſt loſt in thought, when I was ſuddenly rouzed from it by the appearance of Cleora; who, in a rich, genteel diſhabille, came tripping down the walk; and, after looking two or three times round her, ſeated herſelf on a bench juſt oppoſite to St. James's Houſe. My ſurprize to find a lady of her rank alone in that place ſtopped my farther progreſs, and engaged me to draw near her, in order to obſerve whether chance, or any particular motive, had brought her hither. In leſs time than the taking a pinch of ſnuff would laſt, Ariſtus came as from the palace: he ſaw his wife at a diſtance; croſſed over, and came to her, ſaying—

Ariſtus. What, are you here, my dear, and alone?

Cleora. You ſee I am; but I did not expect to be picked up by a gentleman this morning. We are well met, however; and, if you have no buſineſs that requires haſte, ſhould be glad you would give me your company while I ſtay, which will not be long.

Ariſtus. With all my heart. I was only going to the coffee-houſe. And, in return for my complaiſance, you ſhall tell me by what accident I find you here thus unguarded.

Cleora. Can one be unguarded where there are ſo many ſoldiers? But, you muſt know, I have been among the ſhops at Charing Croſs, and made a great many purchaſes. I chuſe to walk over

the Park. I had William with me; but, as I knew the centry would not suffer him to pass through with the things, I sent him home the other way. When I came hither, I found the air so extremely pleasant, that I was tempted to sit down and enjoy a little of it; especially as I found nobody here that I thought would take notice of me. And now you have the whole history of my morning's transactions.

Aristus. A very concise one. But suppose, my dear, you had met with any of the Bucks, the Bloods, or the Buffs, how would you have escaped their attacks?

Cleora. Why, I would have set my arms a-kimbo, and looked as fierce as they. These sort of squires are never bold but to the fearful.

Finding, by their talking together in this gay manner, that they continued in perfect good-humour with each other, I thought I had no business to be an eves-dropper any longer, and was going to quit the place where I had stood; when, just as I had taken it into my head to do so, two gentlemen came down the walk; one of whom, in passing by the bench, stopped short, looked earnestly at Cleora, started, made a low bow, and then went on. She returned the salute, but with a confusion impossible to be expressed. She blushed; she trembled through every joint; her fan fell out of her hand; and she was ready to sink herself upon the seat. A less observing husband than Aristus must have taken notice of this sudden change; but the alarm it gave his jealous heart, was such as compelled him to be speechless for some moments. Cleora in vain endeavoured to recompose herself; all the efforts she made to suppress or to conceal her agitations, rendered them but the more violent, and consequently the more visible. Aristus, at last, broke silence with these words—

Aristus. You seem disordered, Madam. The sight of these gentlemen has had a strange effect upon you.

Cleora. I was a little surprized at the sight of one of them. But that is not all: I am not well.

Aristus. I see you are not, either in mind or body. My coming was unlucky. Had I been absent, you would doubtless have retained your former gaiety. But this is no place to expatiate on the cause of your disorder: I will get one of the soldiers to call a chair; 'tis fit you should go home.

He waited not to hear what answer she would make, but rose hastily up, and spoke to one who was not upon duty. The fellow ran to do as he was desired, and presently returned with a chair. While he was gone, Cleora had recovered herself enough to say to Aristus—'I perceive you are beginning to entertain sentiments to my disadvantage; 'but have patience till we get home, 'and I shall easily make this matter 'clear.' As he was putting her into the chair, she added—'You will follow presently.' To which he replied—'I shall not be long after you; 'though I believe your own meditations, at this time, will be more 'agreeable to you than the company of 'a husband.'

I perceived very plainly, by the countenance of Aristus, that a storm was gathering in his breast, which I doubted not would break forth in thunder. I could not help also being of opinion, that there were some appearances, on the part of Cleora, not much to her advantage. I thought, however, that the best way to form a true judgment of the accidents of that morning, were to see them when they were together; so forbore following either of them, and restrained my impatience till near the hour in which they usually dined, as being the most likely time to find Aristus at home. On my coming to their house, I found the door open, and a footman, in a laced livery, sitting on a bench in the hall, as waiting for an answer to some message he brought. I went directly up to the dining-room: no person being there, I passed on to Cleora's apartment, and found her writing at her bureau. A letter lay open before her, containing these lines—

'TO CLEORA.

'MADAM,

'I Heard not of your marriage till some 'weeks after it was consummated; 'and when I did, the hurry of my af-'fairs, being then just going to Paris, 'prevented my congratulating you upon 'it. I returned to England but three 'days since; and the first enquiry I 'made, was concerning your health 'and place of abode: but the answers 'I received to these interrogatories were

'mingled with ſome other informations, which make me not quite ſure 'that a viſit from me might not give 'offence to that happy gentleman who 'is now your huſband. I would not 'therefore take the liberty of waiting 'on you till I had firſt received your permiſſion. It is a bleſſing I ardently 'long for; but, whether proper for you 'to grant or not, beg you will believe 'that I am, with an eſteem too juſtly 'grounded for change of circumſtances 'to alter, Madam, your moſt faithfully 'devoted, and moſt humble ſervant,

'LEANDER.'

The anſwer given by Cleora to the above billet was as follows—

'SIR,

'THAT I ſtill retain a place in your 'remembrance, demands my 'grateful acknowledgments; and am 'ſorry to tell you, that it is at this diſtance only I can pay my thanks. It 'is eaſy for me to gueſs of what nature 'the informations you mention have 'been, and think myſelf obliged ſo far 'to confirm the truth of them, as to 'let you know the favour you intended 'me is wholly improper for me to receive; and to deſire you will attempt 'no future correſpondence of any kind 'with her who is no longer miſtreſs of 'her actions, but who muſt always 'preſerve in her heart the beſt wiſhes 'for your welfare.

'CLEORA.'

Having ſealed this, ſhe called her maid Betty, and bid her deliver it to the man who waited for it; then took up Leander's letter, and read it two or three times over to herſelf, with very diſturbed emotions; after which, ſhe roſe haſtily from the poſture ſhe had been in, whether with a deſign to burn, or lay it carefully up, I cannot pretend to ſay, for her huſband that inſtant flew into the room, and ſnatched it out of her hand. She ſhrieked; and, in my opinion, very imprudently endeavoured to wreſt it from him. His ſtature, as well as ſtrength, being much ſuperior to hers, he held it at arm's length, and read the contents, in ſpite of all her weak efforts to hinder it; which done, he clapped it into his pocket, ſtamped, bit his lips, meaſured the room with wild unequal paces, ſtill as he turned darting revengeful glances at the trembling Cleora. Theſe, and other ſuch like frantick geſtures, introduced the following dialogue between them—

Cleora. What is there in that letter can have moved you thus?

Ariſtus. Was it not ſent by him whoſe ſight this morning threw you into ſuch diſorder?

Cleora. I was a little ſurprized at the ſudden appearance of a perſon I had not ſeen for a long time; but know not that the diſorder I was in proceeded from that cauſe.

Ariſtus. He knew it did, and I ſuppoſe ſent you this by way of conſolation.

Cleora. You put an odd interpretation on his words, as well as on my looks. Is this, Ariſtus, the effect of all thoſe promiſes you ſo lately made?

Ariſtus. When I made thoſe promiſes, I was ſo weak as to believe there was a poſſibility of your being faithful: but am now convinced of what you are; know that you are the moſt vile of women, and I the moſt accurſed of men!

Cleora. You make yourſelf indeed the one, by your unjuſt ſuſpicions; but no action of mine ſhall ever prove I am the other.

Ariſtus. Death and furies! Did I not meet the villain's ſervant with a letter from you in his hand!

Cleora. Suppoſe you did. I wrote to forbid his coming hither.

Ariſtus. Yes, and no doubt to appoint a place more convenient.

Cleora. 'Tis falſe; nor would the man whom your ſuſpicions wrong me with, harbour a thought to the prejudice either of my virtue or my reputation. No, if you had half his honour, or his love, I ſhould not be the wretch I am.

Ariſtus. Then you confeſs he loves you?

Cleora. He loved me once; and though Heaven thought fit to break off our intended union, I believe ſtill preſerves an eſteem for me.

Ariſtus. As you for him. Hell and vengeance! Dare you avow this to my face! Have I then only the leavings, the refuſe, of a beloved rival! Audacious ſtrumpet!

In ſpeaking this, he ſtruck her ſo violent a blow over the face, that the blood guſhed from her noſe and mouth; on which ſhe cried out—'Villain! there

'wanted

'wanted but this to prove the baſeneſs
'of thy abject ſoul! But think not the
'name of wife ſhall make me tamely
'bear ſuch uſage; no, if the laws of
'England ſhould refuſe me juſtice, I
'will fly to the remoteſt corner of the
'earth, and ſeek refuge among the leſs
'barbarous Hottentots, rather than live
'beneath the roof with ſuch a mon-
'ſter!'

How Ariſtus would have behaved on this is uncertain; a ſervant that moment entered the room, and told him that a gentleman, who it ſeems he had ſent for that morning upon buſineſs, was now come to wait upon him. Whatever was in the mind of this diſtracted huſband, he had no farther opportunity of ſhewing it at preſent; and only giving a furious look at Cleora, and muttering ſome inarticulate curſes between his teeth as he went out, left her to ruminate on what was paſt. She no ſooner found herſelf alone, than ſhe rung the bell for her maid, who appeared quite frighted on ſeeing her lady in ſuch a condition. The girl's exclamations made her turn to the looking-glaſs; and the injury that had been done her, it is probable, gave ſtrength to her reſentment, and ſhe reſolved to put in immediate execution what ſhe had threatened Ariſtus with doing.

Betty had lived with her before her marriage, and was no ſtranger to the love that had been between her and Leander. The enraged fair-one, therefore, ſcrupled not to make her the confidant of the motive of this laſt quarrel with her huſband, and the intention ſhe had of quitting him for ever; then, after conſidering a little in what manner ſhe ſhould manage this affair, gave the following orders—'I would have you take a 'hackney-coach for expedition ſake, 'and go to Mrs. Clip's the tirewoman: 'I know ſhe lets lodgings. If ſhe has 'any apartment ready, hire it directly; 'but if her houſe happens to be full, do 'not return without procuring one for 'me in ſome other; for I am determined 'to go this very day, and ſhall think 'every moment an age till I am out of 'this deteſted place.'

While the maid was gone, Cleora ſet about packing up her cloaths and jewels; which ſhe did with ſuch adroitneſs and diſpatch, that in leſs than an hour every thing belonging to her was ready to be ſent away. In a little more than that time Betty returned, and told her that Mrs. Clip's firſt floor being let, ſhe had agreed for the parlours, which ſhe ſaid were very handſome, and ſhe believed her ladyſhip would approve of, at leaſt till a better apartment could be provided. Cleora was ſatisfied; another coach was called to carry her, and the maid followed in the other with the luggage. Ariſtus was all this time abroad: he went out with the gentleman who had called on him, and his abſence very much facilitated the execution of his wife's deſign; for, had he been at home, 'tis certain that either his love or anger, or perhaps a mixture of both, would have attempted to detain her. But what effects the ſteps ſhe had taken produced, both on the one and the other, muſt be left to the ſucceeding chapter.

CHAP. III.

IN WHICH THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLEORA'S ELOPEMENT ARE FULLY SHEWN, AND AN END PUT TO THAT SUSPENSE WHICH THE FORMER PAGES MAY HAVE EXCITED IN THE MIND OF EVERY INTERESTED AND CURIOUS READER.

I Staid ſome hours at the houſe of Ariſtus, expecting to be witneſs of ſomething extraordinary in his behaviour, when he ſhould be told of the departure of his wife; but he returning not in all that time, I grew weary of the tedious attendance, and quitted my poſt in order to go home; for as to Cleora, I had no thoughts of viſiting her in her new apartment till next morning. It not being late, however, I took it into my head to call at a great coffee-houſe in my way, and lucky was it for the gratification of my curioſity that I did ſo. I found Ariſtus there; he was ſitting at a table, in one corner of the room, ſome diſtance from the other company, with paper and a ſtandiſh before him. I advanced with all the ſpeed I could towards him, and ſaw him write the following billet to Leander—

'SIR.

'YOU are a villain, and have en-
'deavoured to wrong me in a
'point too tender to be forgiven. I

'need only tell you that I am the huſ-
'band of Cleora, to inform you both
'of what I mean, and what ſort of ſa-
'tisfaction my honour demands from
'you, which I expect you will give me
'to-morrow morning at ſeven, in the
'Artillery Ground, Tothill Fields.
'The bearer has orders to wait your
'anſwer to

'ARISTUS.'

This he ſent by a porter to the Braund's Head in Bond Street; at which houſe, as I afterwards diſcovered, he had, with a good deal of pains, got intelligence that Leander conſtantly ſupped every night. I waited behind Ariſtus, with an impatience, perhaps, not inferior to his own, to ſee what reply Leander would make to the above, till the porter returned from him with theſe lines—

'SIR,

'THOUGH your telling me that
'you are the huſband of Cleora,
'cannot make me in the leaſt ſenſible
'how I deſerve the name of villain,
'yet I can eaſily gueſs at the ſatisfac-
'tion you require, and ſhall not fail to
'meet you at the hour and place ap-
'pointed, in hopes of being better in-
'formed for what imaginary cauſe you
'treat in this manner a perſon who nei-
'ther knows, or ever had any deſign
'to injure you.

'LEANDER.'

Ariſtus, after having read this, ſtaid no longer than to drink one diſh of coffee. As I perceived he turned that way which led to his own houſe, I could not forbear accompanying him thither; and I believe, by what I have to relate, the reader will think I had no reaſon to repent the pains I took. He was no ſooner entered, than he aſked haſtily for his wife, doubtleſs with an intention to renew his reproaches, and give a vent to ſome part of the fury he was poſſeſſed of: but never certainly did aſtoniſhment work a more ſtrange effect. On being told ſhe was gone, and the manner in which ſhe went, the ſudden ſhock at once deprived him both of ſpeech and motion; his face grew pale as aſhes; his eyes were fixed in a ſtupid ſtare; and had he been buried for three days, ſcarce could he have appeared more the ghoſt of what he was the moment before. His deadened faculties by degrees reviving, the firſt uſe he made of them was to call up all the ſervants; aſking firſt one, and then another, why ſhe was ſuffered to depart, why they did not ſtop her. To which they anſwered, that having no order from him, they durſt not preſume ſo far; and beſides, they knew nothing of her going till they ſaw the coaches at the door, and the portmanteaus carried out.

He next demanded to what place ſhe had directed herſelf to be carried: but both Cleora and her maid having taken the precaution to give no order to the coachman till they were got ſome diſtance from the houſe, no one of them was able to give him any information; on which he ſent them out of the room, not without ſome curſes on their indolence in not following the coaches: then, thinking himſelf alone, began to give a looſe to the dictates of his deſpair and rage in theſe expreſſions—'Then ſhe is
'loſt, for ever loſt to me! for if ſhe
'ſhould return, my honour, after this,
'would not permit me to receive her.
'Why did I ever marry! What de-
'mon tempted me to become the huſ-
'band of a woman whom I knew all
'mankind muſt love as well as I!
'Curſe on my fond paſſion! curſe on
'her fatal charms! Oh the deceiver!
'the vile hypocrite! There is no longer
'any room for doubt; her flight has
'proved her guilt. Revenge is now
'my ſole relief: ſhe for the preſent has
'eſcaped my reach, but I will ſtab her
'image in Leander's heart. Oh that it
'were morning!'

While uttering the latter part of this exclamation, he flew about the room as if totally bereft of reaſon; till his ſpirits, at length exhauſted by the violence of his rage, ſunk into the contrary extreme, that of dejection: he folded his arms, ſighed, and, with tears burſting from his eyes, cried out—'Oh Cleora,
'Cleora! lovely, perfidious wanton, to
'what haſt thou reduced me!' He then threw himſelf down on a ſettee, with groans like thoſe which iſſue from the breaſts of men dying in their full vigour; whence, after having lain ſome time, he ſtarted up, ſaying—'I will
'think no more! To hear of my diſ-
'tractions would but ſoothe her pride.'

He ſeemed now a little more compoſed, and called for ſomething to eat; but, on it's being brought, could not put one

one morsel into his mouth; so rose from table, and went up to his own chamber; where I did not think fit to pursue him, as having already seen enough to make me know the present disposition of his mind. It was my full intention, however, to go in the morning to the Artillery Ground, to be spectator of the combat between him and Leander; but was disappointed, by sleeping beyond the time they were to meet. This a little vexed me; but I consoled myself with the thoughts of being able to hear the event, by calling some part of the day at the house of Aristus, for I knew not where Leander lived. But my concern for Cleora carrying me first to her lodgings, there I got all the intelligence I wanted. I found that lady, as I believe, just risen from her bed, for she was in a loose entire deshabille. She seemed very pensive, and had the marks of her jealous husband's resentment still flagrant on her lovely face. Betty was not with her when I came in, but entered immediately after, and surprized her with these words—

Betty. Oh, Madam, I have the strangest thing to tell you!—Who does your ladyship think I have seen?

Cleora. Nay, I know not. Who, pray?

Betty. The very footman that brought your ladyship the letter yesterday, and put my master into such a rage. I was never so confounded in my whole life.

Cleora. Confounded, for what?—Where did you see him?

Betty. In the kitchen, Madam. When I went down, just now, to put on the tea-kettle for breakfast, who should I see there but him talking to Mrs. Clip! His master lodges here in the apartment above.

Cleora. Good Heaven! Was there ever so unfortunate an accident! To come to lodge in the same house with the man whom at present it most behoves me to avoid! Do you think he knows you?

Betty. O yes, Madam. Your ladyship may remember it was I that took the letter from him, and carried down your answer. I warrant he knows me again; but if he did not, I find Mrs. Clip has been babbling to him about your ladyship, for I heard her mention your name as I was upon the stairs.

Cleora. Sure I was infatuated not to forbid that woman telling any body I was here. But I must remove immediately: it would be my utter ruin if my husband, or any of his friends, should hear I had lain in this house but only one night.

Betty. Very true, indeed, Madam; and as soon as your ladyship has had your breakfast, I will go out and get another lodging.

Cleora. Don't talk of breakfasting, I will have you go this instant; I am distracted to think where I am.

Betty. Dear Madam, I beg you will not put yourself into such a hurry of spirits. It seems Leander is gone abroad; and these gay gentlemen, when once they go out, seldom return all day. I will engage your ladyship shall be removed before he knows any thing of your being here.

Cleora. You talk like a fool. As he went out so early, he is the more likely to come home to dress; therefore get away. I would not have him see me here for all the world.

Betty, finding her lady so resolute, made no farther delays, but went into the next room, and huddled on her capuchin and gloves; which done, she returned, and asked what part of the town would be most agreeable to her; to which Cleora replied, that all situations were alike to her, but should chuse some one or other of the streets that turned out of the Strand, as she must be private for a while, and had fewest acquaintance that way; and then bid her send Mrs. Clip to her. The maid went out, and Mrs. Clip entered the room presently after. Cleora told her the circumstances of her affairs laid her under a necessity of removing from her house, and intreated she would not make mention of her having been there to any one who might enquire for her. The other expressed a good deal of concern for losing so good a lodger, and assured her of observing secrecy in the point she desired.

While they were talking, a loud knocking at the door made Mrs. Clip run to the parlour window; and seeing who it was, cried out—'Bless me, 'tis 'Leander! His cloaths are all bloody, 'and his arm in a scarf! He has been 'fighting, that's certain! I thought 'there was some such thing in hand, by 'his going out so early this morning.

'I beg

'I beg your ladyſhip's pardon; I muſt 'run and ſee if he wants any thing I 'can do for him.'

Cleora was too much confounded at the name of Leander, and the condition ſhe heard he was in, to offer to detain her; and, after ſhe was gone, fell into a profound reverie, which held her for half an hour; and perhaps might have done ſo longer, if ſhe had not been rouzed from it by a gentle knock at the parlour-door: but how greatly was ſhe ſurprized when, on her calling to the perſon to come in, ſhe ſaw Leander enter! ſhe ſtarted, trembled, and, with a faultering voice, ſpoke thus to him—

Cleora. Oh, Sir, a viſit from you is wholly improper at this time!

Leander. I hope not ſo, Madam; ſince I would not have ſo far intruded, but to acquaint you with ſomething which it may be convenient for you to know. I have ſeen your huſband this morning.

Cleora. Oh my foreboding heart! I dread to aſk the conſequence of ſuch a meeting!

Leander. You need not, Madam. Ariſtus is unhurt, and I bear only one ſlight token of his intent to take my life.

Cleora. Then you have fought?

Leander. It was with the utmoſt regret I drew my ſword againſt the huſband of Cleora. But be pleaſed, Madam, to peruſe this billet; and you will ſee the neceſſity that compelled me to it.

With theſe words he preſented to her the challenge he had received the night before from Ariſtus; which, as ſoon as ſhe had looked over, ſhe returned to him again, ſaying—

Cleora. Unjuſt Ariſtus! But I thank Heaven nothing worſe has enſued.

Leander. Heaven, Madam, has indeed alone the praiſe; ſince it was not to any ſuperior ſkill of mine, or to any generoſity in my antagoniſt, that I am indebted for my preſervation, but to a kind of miracle.

Cleora. As how? Pray, Sir, inform me.

Leander. I know not, Madam, whether I can make you ſenſible how the thing happened, as your ſex are ignorant of the terms made uſe of in the deſcription of ſuch rencounters; but I will do my beſt. When firſt we met, I would have endeavoured to reaſon him out of a miſtake ſo injurious to you and his own peace of mind, as well as to myſelf; but he refuſed to liſten to any arguments I had prepared, and flew upon me with the rage of an incenſed lion. By the manner of his fighting, I eaſily perceived he came with a reſolution either to kill or be killed; ſo, as I was deſirous of avoiding both the one and the other, I only ſtood upon my defence, and parried the puſhes he made; though, in aiming at my breaſt, he ſeveral times expoſed his own. The moderation I obſerved but enraging him the more, he attempted to cloſe with me; and in that action I received a wound in my right-arm, a little above the bend, which hindered me from making any uſe of that wriſt, I ſhifted my ſword into the other hand; ſaying to him, at the ſame time—'You ſee, Sir, I am 'diſabled; we muſt leave the deciſion 'of this affair till ſome other time.'— 'No,' cried he, 'I am not ſo weak as 'to loſe the advantage I have gained.' On this I retreated ſome paces; and then redoubling his attacks, the awkward oppoſition I could now make would not have protected me one moment longer, if, in the very criſis of my fate, when the point of his weapon was juſt ready to tranſfix me to the earth, we had not fortunately been ſeparated. Some people, whoſe windows had a proſpect of the Artillery Ground, ſaw the firſt of our engagement; and making all the haſte they could to prevent the threatened miſchief, arrived in the inſtant I have mentioned, beat down the ſword of Ariſtus, and placed themſelves before me as a ſhield.

Cleora. Pray, Sir, what then did Ariſtus do?

Leander. Walked ſullenly away, purſued by the reproaches of my deliverers till he was out of hearing; and it was with much ado that I prevailed with them to offer him no farther inſults. But, Madam, while I am giving you the hiſtory of my ill-treatment, I fear it is in your power to preſent me with a more ſhocking detail of the cauſe that brought you hither.

Cleora. It is ſuch a one, indeed, as, if the world be not as unjuſt as Ariſtus, will eaſily abſolve me for the reſolution I have taken of never living with him more. But it would happen very unlucky for my reputation, ſhould it be known I have ſeen you even this once; I

therefore

therefore intreat that, after I go hence, you will not think of making me any future visits.

Leander. Though it is hard to suffer for the faults of another, yet, Madam, be assured I shall never desire any thing that may give Aristus a pretence for his ill-treatment. I flatter myself, however, that the remembrance of our former tenderness is not so totally obliterated, but that friendship may subsist between us: you may, at least, permit me to write to you sometimes.

Cleora. I know not whether even that would not be too much.

Leander. Neither virtue, nor duty to the best of husbands, could set down as a fault the favour I request; and, to prevent all misinterpretations of our innocent correspondence, I shall take such precautions as will keep it a secret from all the world.

Cleora. Well, Sir, I cannot refuse this proof of your compassion for me, and think I ought not to deprive myself of any innocent consolation under my present affliction; you may therefore be assured, that I shall receive and answer your letters, with all the satisfaction a woman in my circumstances can or ought to feel.

He was going to make some reply, when Betty returned from her errand. She was a little surprized at seeing him there; and said nothing till her lady, impatient to know the success of what she had been about, spoke thus to her—

Cleora. Well, Betty, have you done the business I sent you on?

Betty. Yes, Madam. Please to step into the next room, and I will give you an account.

Cleora. No, you may tell me here. I dare trust this gentleman's discretion.

The maid then informed her that she had agreed for lodgings at the house of a great taylor, whom she named, in Norfolk Street. On this Cleora desired Leander to retire; saying she must get herself ready, for she was determined to depart immediately. He offered not to oppose her design; but though the l ave they took of each other now was accompanied with the greatest respect on his side, and reserve on her's, I could easily perceive that this interview had rekindled in both their hearts those flames affection they before had felt.

After he had left the room, Cleora's things not having been unpacked, there needed little preparation for her going. She sent for Mrs. Clip, and made her a handsome present for the trouble she had given her house; but finding her a tattling woman, acquainted her not with that to which she was removing. I saw both the mistress and maid, with all their luggage, depart in the same manner they had come; but did not accompany them to their new habitation, as I could not promise myself with finding any thing there as yet worthy my enquiry. The discourse of the town afterwards informed me, that Cleora had employed a lawyer, and was soliciting either to have her whole fortune returned, or an annual allowance to the amount of the interest of it. Aristus was at first refractory to all proposals of this nature; but all his friends, and his mother in particular, joining their persuasions, he at last was prevailed on to sign articles of a final separation; by which it was agreed, that she should have a pension of three hundred pounds a year during his life; and, in case he died before her, her whole fortune restored.

I frequently called upon Cleora, and found that, during this negociation with her husband, she kept her resolution of not seeing Leander; but that affair was no sooner over, than he visited her every day: the consequence of which may easily be guessed at, and was in a short time proved; for they went to Paris together, and still continue to reside there. This last action of Cleora's has doubtless given the world room to believe she had not been wronged by the suspicions of Aristus; but whoever is of this opinion does her a great deal of injustice. The Invisible Spy is a witness for her, that her inclinations were virtuous, her disposition grateful and sincere; and, had she been treated with that confidence a good wife ought to have been, no temptation would have had the power to have made her otherwise. Let all husbands, therefore, beware how they provoke, by ill-usage and distrust, the fate they would avoid; and observe this maxim of the poet's—

'He that would keep the fair-one true and
'kind,
'By love must clap a padlock on her
'mind.'

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

PRESENTS A FULL VIEW OF THE MUCH CELEBRATED SABINA, IN AN IMPARTIAL DESCRIPTION OF HER PERSON AND CHARACTER; WITH SOME PARTICULARS IN RELATION TO HER TWO AMOURS, AND THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH ATTENDED AN ASSIGNATION WITH HER FAVOURITE YOUNGLY.

THAT children do not always behave in the same manner with their parents, is not so much owing to their being born with different propensities, as to their education, and the company they may happen to fall into, at an age when nature is most liable to be swayed by example. We often see the most virtuous couples unhappy in a degenerate offspring, but we rarely see good branches sprout from a vicious stock. An evil disposition may be corrected by advice, by persuasion, by example; and a good one perverted by the same means: but when a person is so unfortunate as to be descended from base and wicked parents, is brought up under them, is witness of all their actions, and has companions of the same cast, it is scarce possible that such a one can have a mind enriched with any noble or moral principles.

What other could the once-doating, deceived Germanicus, expect in his marriage with Sabina, than the vexations he has fatally experienced? Can all the beauties of her person now make atonement for the blemishes of her mind? No; he rather curses than admires those charms that drew him in, and wishes himself any thing, so he were not a husband. Yet ask him why he married, he will tell you he married a woman of fortune, quality, and an uncommon share of beauty. All this is true; but a man not blinded by passion, would have examined by what means the two former were obtained; and, above all, what sort of disposition was hid beneath the varnish of an outside loveliness. Was not her family amongst the lowest rank, till one of them raised himself to opulence by actions which ought to have brought him to a gibbet; and, instead of ennobling his posterity, entailed on them perpetual infamy? Was she not trained up under a mother whose bad conduct has been equally notorious? Was she not, from her most early years, soothed in every vanity, pampered in every luxury, and taught to think that appetites and passions were never given but to be indulged?

Could Germanicus be ignorant of these glaring truths? If he were not, yet rashly ventured on so unpromising a union, who can pity the misfortunes, the disquiets, the disgrace, it has involved him in? The many proofs she gave of too warm an inclination before marriage, as also several of the many amours she had after she became a wife, I shall pass over: the first that made any great noise was that with Miramour, perhaps owing to the manner of it's commencement; which he thinking himself under no obligation to conceal, has since made no secret of in all companies whenever her name comes upon the carpet.

This gentleman had a mistress, who, on account of a certain haughtiness in her temper and behaviour, he called Roxana. He supported her in so genteel a manner, that, had her reputation been equal to her appearance, she might have been entitled to the best company. Character, however, was the least thing considered by Sabina in the choice of her acquaintance. She accidentally met with this lady at a milliner's, fell into discourse with her, liked her, invited her to her house, and there soon grew a great intimacy between them. That Roxana was kept by Miramour was no secret to the town, nor did she attempt to make any of it to Sabina; on the contrary, she talked freely to her of their amorous correspondence. But how dangerous is it for one woman to boast too much of the perfections of her lover, to another no less sanguine in her constitution? Sabina, who had often seen Miramour without taking any notice of him, now became so fired with the rapturous description given of him by his mistress, that she instantly became her rival, and languished to experience in reality that happiness which the other had given her so high an idea of. As she never took any thing of this nature into her head without attempting to accomplish it, and had no regard to decorum in the

manner

manner of her doing so, she sent a billet to him by a porter, containing these lines—

'SIR,

'IF your attachment to the charms of 'your kept mistress makes you 'not look on the rest of womankind as 'insipid creatures, the invitation this 'brings you will not be unwelcome. 'A woman of quality, young, and in 'most men's eyes handsome, has found 'something in you that excites in her 'the desire of a private interview, and 'to that end will call on you this even-'ing about seven, at White's; till when 'must remain, with a great deal of im-'patience,

'Your INCOGNITA.'

The messenger who carried this had strict orders not to tell from whom it came: curiosity, however—for it could be called no other passion as yet—made Miramour punctual to the time, nor was Sabina less so. He had not waited many minutes before she came. On his coming into the coach, he found her face entirely hid under her hood; which she told him, laughing, he must not expect to see, till they were in a place more proper for him to give her proof how agreeable it was to him. On this he ordered the coachman to drive to an adjacent tavern; where being shewn into a private room, the lady soon threw off her disguise. He had not enough depended on the character she had given of herself, not to be surprized and transported on finding Sabina in the person of his incognita; and expressed the sense he had of the honour she did, and the happiness he hoped their meeting would bestow on him, in terms so warm and so passionate, as infinitely charmed her. They passed some hours together to their mutual satisfaction; nor parted without an appointment to see each other the next day: but Sabina, not thinking it safe to come often to so publick a place as a tavern, undertook to provide a more proper scene for the continuance of their intrigue.

As indolent as this lady is in most other affairs, it must be confessed that no woman was ever more punctual, or more indefatigable, in every thing relating to love. On consulting with a female acquaintance, who had been often necessary on such occasions, she was advised by her to hire a private lodging by the quarter, in some obscure nook of the town, to which she might retire whenever she had a mind, as it would be always ready, and neither herself nor the friends she should bring with her be taken any notice of. Sabina highly approving of what she said, the project was put in immediate execution. The woman took upon herself the accomplishment of what she had proposed, and easily found a place every way suitable for the business it was designed. The chamber was neat, spacious, and well furnished; there was a back-door to the house, through which any one might slip out in case of any danger of discovery; and the landlady knew perfectly well the decorum she ought to observe in regard to her guests. The heroine of this adventure was very well pleased with the accommodation procured for her; and having got this recess, which, according to the French, she used to call her *petit maison*, henceforward never met Miramour at any other place.

But there was one thing I forgot to mention in giving the character of this lady, which is the uncertainty of her temper. She is no less inconstant than she is amorous; and changes her lovers almost as often as she does her cloaths, and never keeps either till they are worn out: a new friend, like a new fashion, is always charming to her; but a very little time serves to make her equally grow weary of both. She loved Miramour till she saw Youngly; but there was something in the person and conversation of this last gentleman, that making reason coincide with passion, it is not to be wondered at that she gave him the preference; and a woman of a less mutable disposition might have been easily absolved for transferring her affections to an object so much more worthy than the late engrosser of her heart.

On her first acquaintance with him, she made advances to him; which he is too much a man of pleasure to resist from any fine woman: he returned those of Sabina in a manner which made her think him as much devoted to her as she could wish; and it was not long before she gave him an invitation to drink tea with her at her private apartment, where she told him they might laugh away an hour without interruption. He took the hint, and flew to the place of rendezvous; where it was not to be

doubted but he found all the welcome he could wish or expect from the obliging fair. They had many interviews; but Youngly having by some accident heard of her intrigue with Miramour, he not only frequently reproached her with it, but also was far from feeling for her that affection in his heart, which otherwise her beauty might have inspired him with.

In the mean time Roxana, who from the commencement of Miramour's acquaintance with Sabina had seen him less often than she had been accustomed, and had also some other reasons to suspect a decrease of affection, began presently to imagine some new face had supplanted her. She complained to him of his unkindness, but he absolutely denied having given her any cause, and made a thousand excuses for his late behaviour: but this did not satisfy her, she was not to be deceived in matters of which she was so good a judge; and convinced that she had a rival, bent her whole thoughts on discovering the person. By an emissary whom she employed to watch Miramour wherever he went, she soon found out the place where he met the object of his new attachment; but as that lady was carried into the house in a chair, with the curtains close drawn, was still as far as ever from knowing the face that had undone her. Upon enquiry among the neighbours, she was informed that the house was noted for giving reception to people who liked each other more than they were willing the world should know; and this put a stratagem into her head, which was crowned with all the success she could wish or hope; not only for exploring what at present was a mystery to her, but also for being amply revenged on her fair rival.

The mistress of Miramour knew the town long before she knew him, and was not unacquainted with the customs of such houses. She went one morning to the governante of this; and, after saying she had been recommended by a person who knew her, told her she should be glad to have a chamber, to which she might sometimes come with a friend whom it was not convenient for her to see at home. The old gentlewoman replied, that her best room was rented by the quarter, by a lady who came often thither; and that the next, which was the only one she had to spare, she feared would be too small. Roxana cried she did not regard how small it was, provided it was otherwise commodious. On this she was shewed up to it; and finding it was divided from the other only by a thin wainscot partition, presently agreed for it; giving the old woman so good a premium in hand, that she was highly satisfied with her new incumbent.

Having accomplished so far of her design as to get possession of the very next room to that where her lover and his new mistress met, she began to consider, that to go thither alone might raise some suspicions in the woman of the house, and was a little at a loss what man she should take with her, and make pass for a gallant; as, whoever went, he must be made the confidante of the whole affair. At last she pitched upon the fellow she had employed as a spy upon Miramour. His appearance, indeed, was very mean; but that she thought might not be regarded: accordingly she went the next day, accompanied by her pretended gallant. They were there some time before the hour in which he had told her he had seen Miramour go in, in order to prepare things for a more perfect discovery. This was done by the young fellow's boring holes through the wainscot, in so dexterous a manner, that they could see all over the room without being seen themselves, though they stood close to the orifice. No one, however, came that night; and the impatient Roxana was obliged to return home as dissatisfied as ever.

The next day she repaired thither again, attended as before, and met with the same disappointment; but on the third was more successful. She had not been many minutes in the chamber, when a rustling of silks upon the stairs made her know somebody was coming up; on which she ran hastily, without making any noise, to one of the peep-holes. But how great was her astonishment when she saw Sabina enter! Scarce could she refrain exclaiming aloud against the treachery of a woman who, after being made her confidante, had robbed her of the affections of her lover. But soon the current of her passion turned a different way; when, instead of Miramour, she saw Youngly push open the door, and throw himself into Sabina's arms; on which, withdrawing from her post—'You fool,' cried

cried she to her emissary, 'to what a 'fruitless labour have you exposed me! 'It is not Miramour that I have all this 'while paid you for following. How 'could you be so mope-eyed as to mis-'take him!'—'Nay, Madam,' replied the fellow, 'I am sure I know Mr. Mi-'ramour, and I will swear that it was him 'I saw come into this house, and pre-'sently after a lady in a chair, as I 'then told you.' Roxana knew not what to think of this, and said no more; but listening attentively to the conversation within, was presently assured by it that her agent had neither deceived her, nor had been deceived himself, as will appear by the following dialogue—

Sabina. My dear, dear Youngly, I hope you will now believe that I love you above all the world.

Youngly. I know you love me enough to make me happy, and I ought to content myself with the share I have in your affections.

Sabina. Do not talk of a share: by Heaven, you engross me all! my soul and all it's faculties are devoted to you.

Youngly. And yet the letter Miramour accidentally dropped in the Park, and I took up, flattered him with the same assurances you now give me.

Sabina. As I unfortunately played the fool with him before I saw you, it was necessary I should break with him by degrees.

Youngly. You had once, however, a real passion for him.

Sabina. No, it was all in imagination; I only fancied I loved him. You must know, that silly, vain creature, his kept mistress, was always filling my ears with stories of the violence of his affection for her; and it was more to shew him the difference between such a wretch and a woman of quality, than any extraordinary liking I had to his person, that induced me to grant him the favours I did.

This was enough to let the listening Roxana into the whole affair. It was with much ado she restrained herself from flying into the next room, and returning the contempt thrown upon her by the last words of Sabina; but just as she was at the door, and ready to burst in on the unsuspecting pair, a sudden thought made her turn back. 'All I 'can say to this perfidious woman,' cried she to herself, 'will avail me no-'thing; the wrongs I have received de-'mand a vengeance more compleat.' She then sat down again; and, calmly meditating on what she had to do, the fertility of her invention soon supplied her with the means of repaying, with interest, the double affront Sabina had given both to herself and Miramour, whom it is certain she loved with more sincerity than is commonly found among women of her profession. She staid till the lovers took their leaves of each other, and heard an appointment made between them to meet again on the ensuing Thursday.

Having fully perfected in her mind the design she soon after put in execution, she called for the woman of the house, and said to her—'Madam, I 'know not but some gentlemen may 'pass an hour or two with me here next 'Thursday. They may possibly come 'before me: but I desire you will give 'them admittance; and, to prevent mis-'takes, as the furniture of the room is 'yellow, they shall ask for the key of 'the yellow chamber.' The other replied, that she might depend on her punctuality in observing her commands. After which Roxana went away; but what she meant by the orders she had given must be left to the next chapter to explain.

CHAP. V.

CONTAINS THE CATASTROPHE OF AN ADVENTURE, WHICH THE AUTHOR THINKS FIT TO DECLARE IS INSERTED IN THESE LUCUBRATIONS LESS TO AMUSE HIS READER, THAN FOR THE SAKE OF SETTING IN A TRUE LIGHT THOSE FACTS WHICH SOME PEOPLE HAVE ARTFULLY ENDEAVOURED TO MISREPRESENT TO THE PUBLICK.

ROXANA being now fully furnished with materials for her revenge on Sabina, without exposing her beloved Miramour to the resentment of an injured husband, wrote to the latter, the next morning, in words to this effect—

'TO GERMANICUS.

'SIR,

'THIS brings you a very ungrateful 'piece of intelligence: but, in 'my opinion, whoever sees a person 'wronged, and conceals it, takes part 'in the offence; and, though innocent 'of the commencement of the crime, is 'accessary to the continuance of it. It 'would certainly be the utmost injustice, 'that you should be the last person to 'know what concerns yourself alone; 'and I therefore think it my duty to in-'form you of what chance has disco-'vered to me. Your wife, Sir, is false 'to your bed, and lavishes on Mr. 'Youngly all those favours which you 'have a right to engross. The guilty 'pair meet twice or thrice every week, 'at a lodging she rents by the quarter 'for that purpose. But to say your 'wife is guilty of so foul a crime, is do-'ing nothing, without putting it in 'your power to prove her so: the thing, 'Sir, is easy, if you will follow my di-'rections. The lovers have appointed 'to meet to-morrow, about seven, at 'their usual rendezvous; if you go at 'that time, or rather before it, to the 'third house on the left-hand in **** 'Lane, on your asking for Mrs. *****, 'who is the keeper of this private bro-'thel, and telling her you want the 'key of the yellow chamber, she will 'presently conduct you to a room ad-'joining to that which is the scene of 'your wife's loose pleasures. There are 'holes already bored through the wainf-'cot, through which you may plainly 'discern all that passes. It is at your 'own option whether you will have any 'other witnesses of your wife's trans-'gression than your own eyes and also 'how to behave towards her after de-'tection. I have discharged the dic-'tates of my conscience in giving you 'this information; and am, Sir,

'Your unknown Friend.'

'P. S. Be careful to drop no words 'that may give the woman of the 'house the least cause to suspect 'either who you are, or the motive 'of your coming.'

It is convenient I shou'd now acquaint my reader, that all I have hitherto related of this story has come to my knowledge entirely by the report of the persons chiefly concerned in it, and without the least assistance from my Belt of Invisibility. What yet remains to be told, I have the testimony of my own eyes and ears to avouch. The many odd accounts I have heard, from time to time, in relation to Sabina's conduct, made me resolve to go one day to the house of Germanicus, in order to satisfy my curiosity with seeing in what fashion this couple behaved to each other.

The lady was abroad when I came, and I found him up in his dining-room, diverting himself with playing on the flute; but soon after rouzed from that amusement by the above letter being delivered to him by his man, saying it was brought by a fellow who the moment he had put it into his hands vanished like lightning from the door. The emotions with which he read it were very great, yet much less than might have been expected on such an occasion. He paused, then read again, examined every line with heedful eyes, and seemed extremely divided in his thoughts what credit he should give to the information: at last, said he to himself—'If any one had formed this con-'trivance, through a malicious design 'of ruining her reputation, or my peace 'of mind, they would certainly have 'taken other methods, and not, by 'pointing out the place, the hour, put 'it in my power to prove at once the 'falseness of the accusation.'

After this, he threw himself into an easy chair, leaned his head upon his hand, and in that posture continued musing for a considerable time; then seeming more resolved, started up and cried—'It is easy for me to make en-'quiry if there be such a house, if kept 'by a woman of the name mentioned 'in the letter, and what character it 'bears. Yet, why should I do this?—'No, it is better to follow the instruc-'tions given me, and be at once as-'sured. It shall be so. As Shake-'speare makes Othello say—

"I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, "prove:
"And on the proof there is no more but "this—
"Away at once with love or jealousy."

He had scarce done repeating these lines, when Sabina came in, singing an Italian air. Germanicus endeavoured

to

to recompose his countenance, but could not do it so well as not to make her take notice of the change, and ask if he were out of humour; to which he replied—

Germanicus. Out of humour, Madam? No, I have no cause; none in the world.

Sabina. I think not, indeed; but men will be peevish sometimes, cause or not cause.

Germanicus. I reserve all my gaiety for to-morrow, and would have you do so too. A kinsman of mine makes an entertainment, and has sent an invitation for us to be partakers of it.

Sabina. What, to-morrow?

Germanicus. Yes, my dear, to-morrow evening: so I desire you will not engage yourself elsewhere.

Sabina. Indeed I have engaged myself already to Lady Gape's assembly.

Germanicus. You have time enough, then, to send to excuse yourself from going.

Sabina. Indeed I shall not. I would not disappoint my dear Lady Gape for all the kinsmen in the world. But I would have you go: you may say I am not well, and then my absence cannot be taken amiss.

It was very plain to me, that Germanicus made this pretended invitation only as a trap to discover whether she had really any engagement on her hands that she would not be willing to break; and it is also as little to be doubted, but that her answers very much corroborated the contents of the epistle he had just received. He forced himself, however, to tell her, with a smile, that every thing should be as she would have it, and that he would no farther press her. Some company presently after coming in, I found there was nothing more to be learned at that time, so took the first opportunity of quitting the house; and went again, the next afternoon, in hopes of discovering something more.

On my arrival, the husband and wife were sitting together in the most seeming amicable manner. After some little time Germanicus rose up, and put on his hat and sword, in order, as he said, to go to his kinsman; on which Sabina, with a great deal of complaisance, said to him—

Sabina. You will not walk, sure, my dear! Have you ordered the horses to be put to?

Germanicus. No, my dear; I leave the coach for you.

Sabina. There is no occasion. I always chuse to go to these places in a chair.

Germanicus. That is as you please: but I shall walk, as I have three or four places to call at in my way to my cousin's; so farewel, my dear. I hope you will be as merry at the assembly, as I hope to be at the entertainment.

As I imagined Germanicus had something in his head more than I knew of, by his being so hasty to be gone, I followed him close at his heels, and found I had not been mistaken in my supposition. He went into a tavern, where two gentlemen, whom he had desired to meet him there, waited for him. The business he had with them, was to communicate the letter he had received from the unknown friend; and, after having considered a little on the matter, they agreed that they should all three go together; not only to prevent any indiscreet effects of his rage on the persons who wronged him, in case the affair should prove as the letter had represented, but also to be his witnesses, if he thought proper to bring it before a court of judicature. They staid till a little before seven; then went, according to the directions given by Roxana, and found every thing answered the description. They were shewn up into the yellow chamber: I still accompanied them; and made a fourth person, unfelt, as well as unseen, by any of them.

They had not been there above half an hour, before Sabina came into the next room; Youngly soon after joined her; and the much-injured husband, and his two friends, saw enough, from the peep-holes in the partition, to convince them of the truth of that information which had brought them thither. Difficult was it for Germanicus to restrain his fury on so shocking a spectacle; but his two friends reminding him that there was a much better way for him to shew his resentment, he was at length prevailed on to retire. They both went home with him, as did myself; resolving to see what farther events this night would produce. Sabina came not home till near two hours past midnight: but Germanicus had ordered that the door should not be opened; and, after her chairmen had knocked two or three times, he went himself to the parlour-window, and spoke to her in these terms—

Germanicus.

Germanicus. Pleaſe, Madam, to return from whence you came, or wherever elſe you ſhall think proper. My houſe ſhall no longer be the ſhelter of a proſtitute.

Sabina. What, is the man mad! Sure you have been drinking bad wine to-night!

Germanicus. No, Madam, the beſt I ever drank in my life; it has opened my eyes, and ſhewn me the viper I have ſo long cheriſhed in my boſom, and now throw off for ever. But I would not wiſh you to ſtay longer in the cold; you can have no entrance here; Mr. Youngly will doubtleſs afford you a part of his bed.

With theſe words he ſhut the window; and Sabina, finding herſelf detected, and that her huſband was reſolute, ordered her chair from the door; and after ſome little conſideration how to diſpoſe of herſelf, thought it beſt to take her huſband's advice, and return to the place from whence ſhe came, as it was the only aſylum to which ſhe could have recourſe at ſo unſeaſonable an hour.

In the ſeveral viſits I afterwards made to Germanicus, I perceived he behaved with much more moderation than ſome huſbands would have done. Philoſophy had taught him to ſupport with patience a misfortune which was irremediable; he contented himſelf with taking ſuch revenge as the laws of England have provided in theſe caſes. Youngly was ſummoned before a court of judicature, and a penalty inflicted on him for his offence; but it would have been larger, had it not been proved, by inconteſtible evidences, that he had not been the firſt who had ſeduced Sabina from her marriage-vows. As for the lady, ſhe is now abandoned and deſpiſed by both her lovers; and if there be a poſſibility that any thing can bring her to a juſt ſenſe of the faults ſhe has been guilty of, it muſt be the contempt ſhe is treated with by all degrees of people.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR CONFESSES HAVING BEEN GUILTY OF PETTY LARCENY; BUT HOPES THAT IT MERITS FORGIVENESS FROM THOSE INTO WHOSE HANDS THIS WORK MAY FALL, AS THE CHIEF MOTIVE FOR COMMITTING IT WAS TO OBLIGE THE PUBLICK.

I Have been intimately acquainted with Belinda for a conſiderable time in my viſible capacity, yet never once took it into my head to make her a viſit under the cover of my Belt, till her return from Bath this laſt ſeaſon; nor perhaps had done it then, if I had not been told that ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be conducted to that place by a certain gentleman whom I thought it highly improper for her to continue any converſation with, as he was a married man, and the ſame Philander hereafter mentioned in ſome of Selima's letters. On my entering her apartment, I found her buſy with her waiting-maid in unpacking her baggage; which coming by the waggon, it ſeems had arrived in town but the night before. As I could promiſe myſelf but little entertainment from the aſſortment of ribbands, jewels, &c. I was thinking to quit the place, and return at a more fit ſeaſon; when the maid, pulling out a ſattin bag full of papers, aſked her where ſhe would have thoſe writings laid; on which Belinda turned her head that way, and replied—'They are a 'heap of letters I received at Bath, of 'no manner of conſequence. I have no 'room for ſuch rubbiſh; take and throw 'them all into the fire.'

The maid was juſt going to do as ſhe was bid, but was ſtopped by Belinda, who ſuddenly ſcreamed out—'Hold! 'hold! I had forgot, that one day, in 'a hurry, I ſtuffed two or three letters 'and poems of Philander's among them; 'and I would not have one line of that 'dear witty creature's deſtroyed for all 'the world. Pour them all out of the 'bag, and look on the names ſub-'ſcribed, that I may direct you how 'to ſeparate the wheat from the chaff.' The maid then threw them all down upon the carpet, and opened them one by one; which done, Belinda added—'You need ſearch no farther; I have 'found all Philander's letters and 'poems in this drawer; ſo cram toge-'ther all you have there, and thruſt them

'into

'into the fire.' This sentence was punctually executed, according to the best of the maid's belief; but the poor girl knew not there was an Invisible Thief, who stood close at her elbow, and while she turned her head another way, had the dexterity to preserve some part of the condemned cargo, and slip it into his pocket.

Selima at that time engrossed great part of the conversation in town. She was a young woman of no fortune, and few other endowments besides her beauty, of which, in the opinion of most people, she has an uncommon share; though to me there is a certain fierceness in her eyes, and a boldness diffused through all her features, which rob them of that loveliness which they would otherwise have. Such as she is, however, she captivated the hearts of two persons who might have carried their addresses much higher without danger of a refusal: the one is born to a title, and the other possessed of wealth which, whenever he pleases, may procure him one; and neither of them can be thought deficient in any of those qualifications which constitute the fine gentleman. Yet Selima was still unmarried; both her lovers were equally in suspence, and nobody could tell which, or whether either of them, would be the happy man. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that a person of my humour should be extremely desirous of being let into a secret which seemed so impenetrable, even to those who pretended to be most knowing in other things; nor that I gladly embraced an opportunity which bid so fair for the satisfaction of my curiosity, as the getting her letters into my possession, Belinda having said they contained the whole history of this affair.

Behold now my theft! Belinda's maid had no sooner laid down the packet, by her lady's orders, than I kept my eye constantly fixed upon it, till a convenient moment offered for conveying it from among the others, which I did with great adroitness. After this I staid no longer with Belinda, not doubting but I had now about me better materials for my entertainment, than any I could expect to be furnished with in her apartment, at least for the present.

The distance between Belinda's lodgings and my own seemed now to be twice as long as usual, though I believe I measured much fewer paces than ever I had done before, so great was my impatience to be at home, and examine the treasure I brought with me. To avoid confusion, I examined the dates of every letter, and shall present them to my readers in the order they were sent to her while at Bath.

LETTER I.

'DEAR BELINDA,

'I Received the favour of yours with 'a double satisfaction; first, as it 'brought me news of your safe arrival 'at that agreeable place, and that every 'thing in it answered your wishes and 'expectations; and secondly, as it as-'sures me of your friendship, by the 'kind concern you are pleased to ex-'press for my welfare. As to my 'health, I have quite lost that ugly cough 'which so much persecuted me when 'you left London; but as to my affairs, 'they are still in the same fluctuating 'and unsettled condition as ever. Do-'rantes still continues his addresses, 'Vanucius does the same. How happy 'might I be if I was loved but by one 'of them! but both equally pursuing 'me, impedes all the good fortune I 'might enjoy with either.

'You may remember how much my 'mamma was transported when Do-'rantes first declared himself my lover. 'Vanucius, though not quite dropped, 'was then little regarded either by my-'self or her: but now the case is altered; 'she charges me to treat both with an 'equal freedom; and, indeed, I think 'it would be highly impolitick to do 'otherwise. The truth is, Dorantes 'does not come so directly to the point 'as could be wished: his courtship is 'passionate, tender, and full of fire; he 'swears I am the idol of his soul, that 'he could not live without me, and that 'all his hopes are centered in being one 'day happy in possessing me; yet, 'among all these fine speeches, he sel-'dom mentions marriage; and when 'he does, it is in so slight and evasive a 'manner, as to give me sometimes cause 'to fear his designs are rather on my 'heart than hand. If this should be 'his intention, and I were weak enough 'to have fixed my affection on him, 'how miserable should I be! But, 'thank Heaven, I have none of that 'soft folly in my composition by which

'I have

'I have seen so many of our sex misled; 'my ruling passions are interest and 'ambition; and I would not hesitate 'one moment to give myself to Vanu-'cius, if the rank and title of Do-'rantes did not tempt me to wait awhile 'the result of his pretensions.

'I was yesterday morning in the Mall 'with Vanucius: Dorantes was walk-'ing there with some company; he 'changed colour, and seemed in some 'agitation on meeting us together. 'This I looked upon as a good sign; 'but in the afternoon, when he came to 'visit me, and I expected he would either 'have complained of my indifference to 'him, or reproached me for the publick 'encouragement I had given his rival; 'he did neither, but behaved the whole 'time with all the calmness and insen-'sibility of a Stoick. I must confess, I 'was never more disappointed in all 'my life, as I had frequently seen him 'kindle into jealousy on a less occasion; 'and could not help thinking that the 'violence of his passion was in a great 'measure abated, according to this 'maxim of Mr. Dryden—

"Distrust in lovers is too warm a sun;
"But yet 'tis night in love when that is
"gone."

'On consulting with my mamma, I 'found she was of the same way of 'thinking; and it was agreed upon be-'tween us, not to suffer ourselves to be 'trifled with any longer, but that the 'next time Vanucius made an offer of 'his hand, I should accept it. But, 'my dear Belinda, this morning has 'put a stop to the resolution of last 'night. I was scarce out of bed, 'when I received from Dorantes the 'most passionate billet that ever was dic-'tated by the heart of man; occasioned, 'as he says, by dreaming he had me in 'his arms. If his love be half so im-'patient to have me there as he pretends 'it is, he will certainly be now more 'pressing to make me his own than hi-'therto he has been.

'My next, perhaps, may bring you 'the decision of my fate: mean time, I 'should be glad to hear what is doing 'at Bath, and what new conquests you 'have made there; for how much so-'ever you may be envied by some of 'your acquaintance, be assured that 'every thing that contributes to your 'satisfaction, will always afford a se-'cret pleasure to her who is, with the 'most perfect amity, &c.

'SELIMA.'

LETTER II.

'DEAR BELINDA,

'I Am sorry to tell you, that the per-'plexity of my own affairs has hin-'dered me from being inquisitive enough 'into those of other people, for me to 'be able to send you the intelligence 'you request; but as I flatter myself, 'that what regards myself will be al-'ways most interesting to you, I shall 'give you a brief detail of what has 'happened to me in relation to Dorantes, 'since his last kind letter mentioned in 'my former.

'He came the same evening. The 'discourse he entertained me with was 'of a piece with his epistle, all love and 'transport. He begged I would favour 'him with my company to the theatre 'in Drury Lane, where he had already 'sent a servant to keep places in the 'box; I consented, and went with him 'in his chariot. The play was Romeo 'and Juliet: he applied all the tender 'things spoke by the former of these 'lovers to his own passion, and pressed 'my hand with a vehemence of fond-'ness, whenever he had an opportunity 'of doing so unperceived by the audi-'ence.

'I saw him again next day. We 'were alone together in the dining-'room; and my gown being a little 'more off my shoulder than ordinary, 'he laid his face upon my bare neck, 'crying—"Oh, I could dwell for ever "here!" On this I took courage to 'say to him—"Yet, Dorantes, when "once I become your wife, these ar-"dours will perhaps sink into a cold "indifference."—"No, my angel!" 'returned he, "desire will rather in-"crease by enjoyment of your person; "the sweets contained in this dear "frame are of too divine a nature ever "to satiate." In speaking these words, 'he catched me suddenly in his arms, 'held me to his bosom, and joined his 'lips to mine with so newhat, I thought, 'of an unbecoming warmth. I strug-'gled to get loose; and when I had 'done so, retired some paces from him, 'and said, with all the haughtiness I

'could assume—" Forbear these liber-
" ties, Sir, till authorized by law to
" take them." He asked my pardon,
'apologized for what he had done by
'the violence of his passion, and then
'sat down; but appeared more than or-
'dinarily pensive afterwards, spoke lit-
'tle, and made his visit much shorter
'than usual.

'On my acquainting my mamma with
'what had passed between us, she did not
'at all like it, and went directly to her
'old friend, you know who I mean, to
'be advised by him how to proceed in a
'circumstance at once so intricate and
'critical. He told her, that my father
'ought to appear in this business; that
'it was his place, and his alone, to de-
'mand of Dorantes an explanation of
'his designs in regard to the courtship
'he so long had made to his daughter.
'My mamma had always been of his
'opinion; but knowing the indolence
'of my father's temper, had forbore
'mentioning it to him: however, she
'urged it to him, but all she could say
'or offer has been ineffectual; his an-
'swer was, that he did not know how
'to speak to a person of Dorantes's qua-
'lity on any such matter; that he would
'not interfere in it, and we might act
'as we thought proper ourselves.

'This, you will own, is very vexa-
'tious; but there is no turning him out
'of his own way. Mamma is now re-
'solved, since there is no other remedy,
'to take the task upon herself, as soon
'as Dorantes comes to town: he is at
'present gone on a hunting-match with
'some gentlemen, but is expected to re-
'turn in two days at farthest, and we
'shall then see the event. For my part,
'my spirits are so much fatigued and
'harassed with this suspence, that there
'is but one thing hinders me from put-
'ting an immediate end to it by mar-
'rying with Vanucius. The persons
'of the men are equal to me; but, O
'Belinda! I am passionately in love with
'the title of Dorantes! Would he were
'half as much so with my person, he
'would not then delay one moment
'giving me the one in exchange for the
'other.

'The faithful Vanucius, whom I
'have flattered with the belief of not
'being indifferent to me, is every day
'soliciting me to fix a time to make him
'happy, while Dorantes seems to dally
'with my expectations; yet can I not
'resolve to reward the constant services
'of the one, nor to renounce for ever
'the charming hope of rank, pre-
'cedence, the thousand dear appen-
'dages of a woman of quality, which
'the other has it in his power to be-
'stow on me. But I will trouble you
'no farther, than to assure you, that in
'whatever station my fate shall place
'me, I shall be ever, with the best
'wishes for your happiness, &c.

'SELIMA.

'P. S. I am obliged to Philander
'for the part you tell me he takes
'in my concerns. Pray be so
'good as to make my grateful
'acknowledgments acceptable to
'him.'

LETTER III.

'DEAR BELINDA,

'I Would not let this post escape with-
'out writing. What I have now
'to say to you, though greatly to the
'purpose, must be comprized in a few
'words. I am engaged to go this
'evening with Dorantes, and some other
'company, on a party of pleasure, and
'am every moment expecting his lan-
'dau at the door, so can but just snatch
'time to inform you, that my mamma
'has talked to him on the affair in
'question, and that his answers have
'been conformable to our utmost wishes.
'Yes, I am now convinced that all my
'apprehensions were groundless, that
'he never meant to act otherwise than
'honourably with me: he has assured
'both her and myself, that every thing
'shall soon be settled for my future hap-
'piness. Rejoice with me, my dear
'creature! I have now a heart and
'head perfectly at ease; and nothing
'to employ my thoughts, but how to
'behave becoming of the dignity to
'which, I flatter myself, a few days
'will raise me. Farewel. The author
'of my joys is already come; they call
'me to receive him; and I can add no
'more, than that I am, as ever, with un-
'feigned regard, &c.

'SELIMA.'

LETTER

LETTER IV.

' DEAR BELINDA,

' LITTLE did I expect, and little ' is it in your power to imagine, ' what I have now to acquaint you with. ' So ſtrange a reverſe, ſo ſudden, ſo ' ſhocking a revolution, ſure never any ' woman but myſelf experienced! But ' I will keep you no longer in ſuſpence: ' I have loſt Dorantes, irrecoverably loſt ' him! not through any miſmanage- ' ment of my own, nor any want of af- ' fection in him, but through a previ- ' ous, much worſe, and more irreme- ' diable accident. This is the ſum of ' my misfortunes; I will now relate to ' you the particulars.

' He came to me the other day; and ' though the ſalutations he approached ' me with had their accuſtomed tender- ' neſs, yet I thought there was ſome- ' what in his countenance, and the ' whole air of his deportment, very dif- ' ferent from any thing I had ever ſeen ' in him before. He had not been in ' the room many minutes, before he told ' me that he had ſomething of conſe- ' quence to impart to me, and deſired I ' would order myſelf to be denied to ' whoever ſhould happen to come. I ' readily did as he deſired; after which, ' he drew his chair cloſe to mine, ſighed, ' and, looking me full in the face, ſur- ' prized me with theſe words—" My " dear Selima," ſaid he, " I have de- " ceived you; have you love enough for " me to forgive it?"—" Firſt let me " know the nature of your offence," re- ' turned I. " 'Tis death to me to de- " clare it," anſwered he; " yet can it " be no longer hid. I have impoſed " upon you by a falſe pretence, pro- " miſed what is not in my power to per- " form—I cannot marry you!"

' Judge, Belinda, of my confuſion. ' But it is as impoſſible for you to con- ' ceive, as it is for me to deſcribe, what ' I felt in that dreadful moment. Scarce ' could a thunderbolt have transfixed ' me more: I had no breath, no voice, ' but to echo part of his laſt words— " Cannot marry! cannot marry!" cried ' I; and this I repeated ſeveral times ' over.

' He ſeemed all this time in very great ' agitations; and, after taking one of ' my hands, and tenderly preſſing it to ' his lips—" Heaven knows," ſaid he, " how earneſtly I deſired the union I " propoſed! Gladly would I reſign the " one half of thoſe years fate has al- " lotted for my life, to have the other " bleſſed with the poſſeſſion of my Se- " lima in the way ſhe expects from me; " but, alas! that hope is vain. The " fatal ſecret is this: I am already mar- " ried; my heedleſs and unwary youth " was enſnared to give my hand to a " creature who, though I never did, " nor never will, live with as a wife, " will not, on any conſideration, be " prevailed upon to reſign the curſed " claim ſhe has to me as a huſband."

' Overwhelmed as I was with various ' paſſions, I at laſt aſſumed reſolution ' enough to tell him that he had acted a ' moſt ungenerous and diſhonourable ' part in making his addreſſes to me, ' knowing himſelf under ſo indiſſoluble ' an engagement to another. To which ' he replied, that at firſt he hoped to ' have got quit of his unfortunate tie; ' and that after he found all the offers ' he had made to that end were fruit- ' leſs, the paſſion he had for me would ' not ſuffer him to reſtrain himſelf from ' ſeeing me, converſing with me, and ' telling me how much he adored me. ' He then made a long harangue on the ' reſiſtleſs power of my charms, and the ' violence of that flame they had in- ' ſpired him with; ſwore a thouſand ' oaths, that the world had nothing in ' it but myſelf worth living for; and ' concluded with a propoſal, that ſince ' he could not make me his wife, he ' would ſettle a thouſand pounds a year ' upon me to be his miſtreſs; and that it ' ſhould be at my option either to live ' publickly with him as ſuch, or to ' continue with my mamma, and re- ' ceive his viſits in a private manner.

' This offer I rejected with more diſ- ' dain than I had ſhewn to any of the ' like nature which had ever been made ' to me ſince my firſt being in the way ' of temptation; nor will you wonder ' that I did ſo. To be courted for ' a miſtreſs by the very man who had ſo ' lately flattered me with the hopes of ' marriage, made me now look upon ' that as an affront, which, before my ' expectations had been raiſed to the ' height they had been, I might perhaps ' have taken as a proof of his affection. ' I ranted, ſtormed, concealed no part ' of the ſpite I was poſſeſſed of; but all ' I ſaid ſeemed to make no great im-

'preſſion on him; he bore it with a temper which I thought not at all conſiſtent with the violence of the paſſion he had pretended; and, on his going away, calmly told me, that he would make the ſame propoſal he had done to me to no other woman in the world; that it was no inconſiderable one; and that, as he could do no more, he hoped my cooler moments would repreſent it as a thing worthy my attention.

'Indeed, my dear Belinda, I was half mad; and believe I gave myſelf ſome airs not any way becoming in me to a man of his quality. I met him in the Park this morning; but though he was alone, and I had only Flavia with me, he never offered to join us, but paſſed by with a ſlight bow. I ſuppoſe he reſents my behaviour; but it is no matter, ſince he is married. Vanucius is now my laſt reſource. If I could perſuade the man to purchaſe a title, he would be full as agreeable to me as Dorantes; but he is an unambitious creature, and I almoſt deſpair of it: I ſhall try, at leaſt, how far the love he has for me will prevail. My next will bring you news of what ſucceſs my endeavours will meet; till when I am, even in the midſt of my perplexity, &c.

'SELIMA.'

LETTER V.

'DEAR BELINDA,

'IT is almoſt a ſin to diſturb the felicity you enjoy with any melancholy accounts: but freſh calamities will always occaſion freſh complaints; and while I am giving you a detail of my misfortunes, methinks I am eaſed of ſome part of the weight of them. You may ſay, indeed, that this is a ſelfiſh conſideration, and I cannot deny the accuſation; but have this to anſwer in my defence—"However diſagreeable the purport of my letters are, they ſhew, at leaſt, the perfect confidence I have in your friendſhip and good-nature."

'I am apt to think that, before I tell you, you will ſuſpect I am alſo deſerted by Vanucius; and though I cannot be poſitive that ſuch a conjecture would be entirely groundleſs, yet I have little reaſon to flatter myſelf with the contrary. I have neither ſeen nor heard from him for five whole days; and this morning he ſet out for Tunbridge, without taking any other leave of me, than ſending a ſlight excuſe for not waiting on me before he went. But this is not all: a relation of his, who I know has always looked upon his courtſhip to me with an evil eye, and had, not long ago, ſo great a quarrel with him on the occaſion, that he was forbid his houſe, is now ſo far reinſtated in his good graces, as to be gone with him into the country; and I do not doubt but will take this opportunity of filling his ears with a thouſand ſtories to my diſadvantage, as he has ever done ſince my firſt acquaintance with him.

'Thus, my dear Belinda, from having, as I thought, my choice of two of the beſt matches in town, I am likely to loſe all hopes of both, and alſo to fall into the contempt and ridicule of thoſe flirts who ſo lately envied my good fortune. This laſt circumſtance is above all ſo truly mortifying, that after it I know not whether I ſhall ever be able to ſhew my face in any publick aſſembly, but rather take the ſame pains to conceal myſelf, as I once did to be conſpicuous. But farewel. The more I reflect on theſe accidents, the leſs I am capable of reſtraining my paſſion enough to aſſure you, with how much ſincerity, &c.

'SELIMA.'

LETTER VI.

'DEAR BELINDA,

'I Expected no leſs, from your known goodneſs, than the conſolatory ideas you endeavour to inſpire me with. You would fain perſuade me that I have no reaſon for deſpair; and that the ſame beauty which attracted the hearts of Dorantes and Vanucius, will alſo gain others of equal eſtimation; but, alas! I have too much experience of myſelf, and of what the world thinks of me, to entertain ſo flattering a hope. You know very well, my dear, that on my firſt ſetting up for conqueſt, I ſhewed myſelf in all publick places, and expoſed to the view of all who ſaw me, almoſt every

'charm

'charm nature has beſtowed upon me; 'yet never was addreſſed, on the ſcore 'of marriage, by any but thoſe two 'whom I have now loſt. Beſides, I 'am now what they call blown upon: 'that admiration which my firſt appear-'ance excited, wears off by my being 'ſo often ſeen; and I begin to be con-'vinced, that it was more owing to the 'peculiarity of my dreſs, and manner 'of behaviour, than to any real perfec-'tions of my perſon, that I was ſo much 'followed by a gaping multitude.

'You ſee how I am humbled; and, 'by what I have ſaid, may perhaps 'imagine that I have ſo far done with 'the pride and vanities of the world, as 'to take up with a little mercer or wool-'len-draper, if ſuch a one ſhould offer. 'But do not harbour ſo deſpicable an 'opinion of your friend: no, I will never 'ſit behind a compter, or be the wife of 'one that does. But I need not make 'this declaration; as matters ſtand, I 'am not likely to be the wife of any 'body: but ſtill, with an inviolable 'reſpect, &c.

'SELIMA.'

LETTER VII.

'DEAREST BELINDA,

'NOW may all the gods of love and 'wit inſpire my pen, to deſcribe 'to you, as it deſerves, the bleſſed re-'verſe in my condition ſince the laſt 'melancholy epiſtle you received from 'me. I was then plunged in the loweſt 'pit of deſpair, and am now raiſed to 'the higheſt ſummit of human feli-'city. In a word, I am the contracted 'ſpouſe of Dorantes; and, as ſoon as 'the preparations for our wedding can 'be got ready, I ſhall be the declared '***** of *****. Methinks I ſee 'the ſurprize I put you in. You will 'doubtleſs cry out—"How can this be, "when Dorantes has already confeſſed "himſelf the huſband of another?" 'It ſeems, indeed, a paradox; yet ſtands 'in no need of ſchool-learning to be 'explained, as you will preſently diſco-'ver.

'After the loſs of both my lovers, as 'I then imagined, I ſcarce did any 'thing but lie upon the bed and weep 'for two whole days together. My 'father, inſtead of ſaying any thing to 'conſole my afflictions, added to them 'by his reproaches, He told me that 'he knew what it would come to; that 'dreſſing myſelf up like a Bartholo-'mew baby would never get me a huſ-'band; and ſuch like ſtuff, as you know 'his low way of expreſſing himſelf: 'but, thank Heaven! the tables are 'now turned upon him; and if re-'ſpect for my mamma did not reſtrain 'me, I ſhould return his flouts with in-'tereſt.

'One afternoon, as I was ſitting at 'the window, with the ſaſh up, muſing 'on my unhappy fate, I ſaw Dorantes's 'chariot at the door. While his foot-'man knocked, he looked out, and 'made me a very reſpectful bow. I 'was amazed; but thought it would be 'too groſs an affront to a man of his 'quality to be denied to him, as he ſaw 'I was at home; nor had I time for 'ſuch a thing, if I would have done it; 'for the maid, who opened the door, 'ſhewed him directly up ſtairs. On 'his entrance, I aſſumed one of thoſe 'haughty airs, which vulgar, low-bred 'people, are apt to call impudent and 'ſaucy; and, with my head half turned 'another way, ſaid to him—"I am ſur-"prized to ſee you here, Dorantes, af-"ter the converſation you entertained "me with at your laſt viſit."

"Oh, Selima," replied he, "I came "not now to repeat the audacity I was "then guilty of, nor to offend your "ears with any future diſcourſes of the "like nature, but to beg pardon for the "paſt; and hope that what I have to of-"fer will make ſome atonement."—"I "do not comprehend your meaning," 'returned I; "but, whatever it may "be, cannot think it becomes me to "continue any correſpondence with a "married man, who has pretended to "make his addreſſes to me."—"I am "not married," rejoined he eagerly; "and the trial I made of your virtue, "adds a double luſtre to the beauty "that firſt inflamed me, and I am "now much more your ſlave than "ever."—"Not married!" cried I; "why then did you tell me ſo?"—"Pardon the innocent impoſition I "practiſed on you," ſaid he, kiſſing 'my hand: "I was willing to ſee in "what manner you would reſent it; "your behaviour has anſwered to my "wiſh, and I now offer you a hand

"which

" which I never had one thought or
" wish to dispose of to any other wo-
" man."

' Oh, Belinda, how did my heart
' flutter at these words! As Semandra
' says in the play—

" I took them all, and died upon the sound:
" To the driv'n air my flying soul was
" fasten'd.
" Each charming syllable he spoke was
" mine."

' The many passionate and endearing
' things he said to me would not come
' within the compass of twenty letters:
' you must therefore, till I have a better
' opportunity of relating the particu-
' lars, content yourself with a brief
' summary of the whole, which is this;
' that he is entirely at liberty to marry
' me, and he is resolved to do so; that
' an agreement the same night was made
' between us for that purpose; and that
' mamma and her good friend, who
' luckily happened to be with her, were
' called in to be witnesses of it.

' Since every thing has been settled
' thus happily for me, some people have
' been impertinent enough to assure me,
' that to their own knowledge Dorantes
' was married several years ago, and
' that his wife is still alive; but this
' gives me no manner of concern. If
' there be any woman who has a claim
' of this nature on him, he has doubt-
' less found means to prevail on her
' to relinquish it; so I look upon it as
' none of my affair. He marries me in
' the face of the world; has promised to
' present me at court; and while I en-
' joy the title of ******* of ******,
' and the grandeur annexed to it, shall
' not trouble myself with any whispers
' that may go about the town in relation
' to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of
' my marriage.

' It is no inconsiderable addition to
' my contentment, to hear that you de-
' sign to return to town in a short time.
' I long to see you, and to give you an
' airing in my own coach and six, with
' three flaunting footmen on the back of
' it: we shall cut a better figure, Belinda,
' than when we made our little excur-
' sions together in a mean, dirty hack.
' O, Fortune! Fortune! dear, propi-
' tious Fortune, how am I bound to
' praise thee! But no more at present,
' than that I am, with the greatest good
' wishes, &c.

' SELIMA.

' P. S. I need not desire you to tell
' Philander what has happened; I
' know you will, and also that his
' regard for you will make him
' participate in the happiness of
' your friend. Once more, adieu.'

Here end the letters of this celebrated lady, who in a very little time after married Dorantes.

CHAP. VI.

CONSISTS CHIEFLY OF SOME REFLECTIONS OF THE AUTHOR'S OWN ON FALSE TASTE, THE MISTAKEN ROAD IN THE PURSUIT OF FAME, AND THE FOLLY OF AN ILL-DIRECTED EMULATION. TO WHICH ARE ADDED, A FEW FAINT SKETCHES TAKEN FROM THE MOST AMIABLE ORIGINALS IN MODERN LIFE.

THE celebrated Dr. Bussy tells us, than when we say a man has a fine or true taste, no more is meant by those words, than that he has a sound judgment, a clear head, and a nicely distinguishing capacity in judging of what is really worthy and becoming, and what is not so; whether it be in the choice of his amusements, his equipage, his apparel, the furniture of his house, the covering of his table, or whatever else depends on the direction of the will and fancy. Now, as every thing is best shewn by it's opposite, if the definition given us by the French author of the true taste be just, as I believe most people will allow it is, to think and act contrary to what he describes, is what we call false taste: but, in my opinion, to think and do always what is wrong, and at the same time imagine that all we think and do is right, is not of itself sufficient to take in the meaning of the phrase in it's full extent; there must always be added an affectation of being singular, over curious, over delicate, over elegant, somewhat above the common level of mankind; in fine, the man of a false taste must not be a fool of Heaven's making,

making, but his own. The late witty Earl of Rochester has presented us with a very picturesque character of the man of false taste, in the following lines—

'He was a fool through choice, not want
'of wit;
'His foppery, without the help of sense,
'Could ne'er have risen to such an excel-
'lence.
'Nature's as lame in making a true fop
'As a philosopher: the very top
'And dignity of folly, we attain
'By studious search, and labour of the
'brain;
'By observation, counsel, and deep thought.
'God never made a coxcomb worth a groat:
'We owe that name to industry and arts;
'An eminent fool must be a man of parts.'

A person may be endowed with great talents, yet, through a false taste in the manner of displaying them, be rendered ridiculous instead of respectable; and, while he aims at attracting universal admiration, become the object of universal contempt. Hippias is profoundly learned, is well skilled in the most useful sciences, and endowed, both by nature and education, with every requisite to render him a worthy member of society; yet, by some unaccountable oddities of manners and behaviour, he makes himself hated where he might be loved, despised where he might be respected, and a mere cypher in a world where he might be a figure of the greatest consequence. He is not at all dissatisfied that every one knows and speaks of him as a man possessed of a very opulent fortune, yet affects to look down with scorn on all the pleasures, and even innocent amusements, it might afford him; and to such an excess does he carry this humour, that whatever is beyond the necessities of nature he treats as luxury and epicurisms; vainly imagining that the wearing of a threadbare coat, and a wig that the head it covers scarce remembers ever to have had a curl, entitles him to the character of a philosopher.

But this ostentatious humility, as I think it may be justly called, is not the most unpardonable error into which Hippias is led by his false taste: this serves only to make him ridiculous, but there is another which makes him hateful. The ambition he has of being reverenced as a Stoick, renders him deaf to the dictates of humanity, and wholly insensible of all social feeling for his fellow-creatures. He partakes not in the joys or griefs of even those he calls his friends; nor would lift a finger, move a step, or speak a syllable, either to promote the one, or dissipate the other. The most distressful circumstance has not the power to touch his heart; and if any one knows him little enough to employ his assistance or advice in the extremest exigence, he replies, with a solemn and magisterial air, that he can say nothing to their complaints; that pity is a passion; and that, by the force of his reason, he has divested himself of all passions, of what kind soever. Thus does Hippias, by indulging one unhappy propensity, forfeit all the love and esteem the qualities he is possessed of would otherwise attract. The manner in which he is now looked upon gives me room to suspect that, whenever he makes his exit from this world, he will have an epitaph somewhat like what I read on a tomb-stone in a country church-yard—

'Here ******, stretch'd at his full length,
'is laid;
'Whom, living, no one lov'd, nor mourn'd
'when dead.'

Numberless are the instances might be given to prove the best capacities may be, and frequently are, perverted by false taste and misapplication. As one of our most eminent authors tells us, the love of fame is the universal passion; it is imprinted, in a more or less degree, on every human heart. Those who have great talents, are apt to think they can never render themselves sufficiently conspicuous; and those of weaker intellects, yet possessed of the same vanity, are sometimes so infatuated, as, rather than not to make a noise in the world, to do things which may incur a lampoon, since they cannot deserve a panegyrick. A private life, or, as they term it, a life of obscurity, is to some people the severest misfortune they can labour under: they will tell you, that they may as well be out of the world, as of no consequence in it; and few there are who will take the poet's word for a contrary passion—

'Th' unknown, untalk'd of man, is only
'blest;
'No anxious doubts his peaceful breast an-
'noy,
'From praise and censure equally remote;
'Nor

'Nor hope, nor fear, his happineſs de-
'ſtroys,
'But ſafe within himſelf, himſelf enjoys.'

There are alſo people who, having no peculiarities of their own, affect to imitate thoſe they may ſee in others; eſpecially if the perſon they copy after be of a ſuperior rank, or has the reputation of a wit. Theſe may properly enough be called ſecond-hand fools; for they generally take up the follies juſt when they are left off by the perſons they would be thought exactly to reſemble: according to a vulgar adage—'The fool will ſometimes peep out of 'the wiſeſt man.' The leaſt failing in a perſon of diſtinguiſhed character is preſently adopted by his inferiors, till it becomes a faſhion. Emulation, however, when well-directed, is one of the moſt noble propenſities of the mind; nothing can be more truly laudable than an endeavour to ſquare our actions by a praiſe-worthy model: but I am ſorry to ſay, that this is not ſo often the caſe as every good man would wiſh it were.

There are ſome people ſo unhappy, as to take for a pattern all the bad they can find, and neglect all the good; and this, too, without deſign, or any untoward inclination, but through mere careleſſneſs: and, provided they do ſomething ſuch a one or ſuch a one does, give not themſelves the trouble to examine whether what they imitate be a beauty or a blemiſh; or, indeed, whether it be either, or only a matter of indifference, and altogether unworthy of regard. And, now I am upon this head, I cannot forbear relating an example of the ſort I laſt mentioned; which, though it happened ſome years ago, and is extremely trifling in itſelf, may ſerve to ſhew how little care people ſometimes take in their choice of an object for imitation.

A young gentleman of my acquaintance, who paſſed in the world for a very pretty fellow, either was, or affected to be, becauſe it was the mode, a prodigious admirer of the late deſervedly famous Sir Iſaac Newton. He had the honour of being known to that truly great man, frequently viſited him, and had the opportunity of hearing many things from him, which doubtleſs were well worthy of being treaſured in his memory; yet I could never find he took particular notice of any thing but this I am now going to repeat. Sir Iſaac had him at his table one day, and happened caſually to ſay, that he thought nothing ſweeter than a bacon bone. My friend immediately catched up the word, and from that moment made it his own, and on all occaſions quoted it. If any one aſked him to eat with them, he would reply—'Yes, if you have any bacon; 'for, as Sir Iſaac Newton ſays, there is 'nothing ſweeter than a bacon bone.' In fine, he went to no place, mingled in no converſation, without finding ſome means to introduce the ſweetneſs of the bacon bone; and repeated the above-mentioned expreſſion ſo often, and ſo impertinently, that at laſt he became the jeſt of all his companions, who, in deriſion, called him by no other name than the Bacon Bone. Ridiculous as this may appear, I can aſſure my reader, that the gentleman I have been ſpeaking of does not ſtand alone, but has many parallels in my catalogue of obſervations on a miſguided imitation, as I could eaſily prove; but my humour has on a ſudden changed it's vein, and I begin to grow too ſerious to recite any farther inſtances of ſo ludicrous a nature. Degenerate as we mortals are ſaid to be, yet even now there are not wanting ſome few illuſtrious examples of both, whom even an endeavour to copy after would be ſome merit in the attempter.

See where the noble Altamont ſtands forth a ſhining pattern of exalted virtue! Dignity in his countenance; benevolence in his hand; the ſtricteſt juſtice, honour, and ſocial kindneſs, in his heart. Near him you will always find the chaſte and fair Euphemia, his illuſtrious conſort; a numerous and beauteous offſpring with joyous ſmiles play round their feet; Juno and Hymen hover over their heads, and ſhower continual bleſſings on the happy pair. From Altamont and Euphemia, ye huſbands, fathers, learn the duties due to thoſe endearing names, and ceaſe to imagine that to ſwerve from them is politeneſs.

Learn you who languiſh in a widowed bed, from Eliſmonda learn to ſupport the melancholy of your condition as becomes you—Eliſmonda, who though, as Lee expreſſes it, in all the full-grown pride of glorious beauty, diſdains all overtures for a ſecond marriage, ſhuns pomp and ceremony, nor haunts the court nor publick walks; but in her cloſet ruminates what good is in her

power

power to do; who moſt deſerves, and who ſtands moſt in need of her relief; and all thoſe cares ſhe once employed to pleaſe the beſt of huſbands, are now taken up with acts of piety and ſoft compaſſion.

Learn, ye fair ramblers after ſhew and hurry, ye midnight gadders to maſquerades and balls, from lovely Amadea learn the timid modeſty that beſt befits and beſt ſecures the honour of a virgin ſtate. She takes no pains to attract the eyes of the gaping multitude, and rather ſhuns than covets popular admiration. She avoids being the firſt in any new faſhion, and never runs into the extremes of it; goes to no routes, aſſemblies, or maſquerades; ſeldom indulges herſelf even with a play or opera; and, when ſhe does, is always accompanied by ſome grave relation, whoſe preſence is a check on the impertinence of thoſe whifflers who ſkip from box to box, ſaying the ſame thing to every fine woman they ſee there. When ſhe walks in the Park, ſhe makes choice of thoſe hours when the leaſt company are there; and the only publick place you are ſure to find her in, is at church.

The example of Dorilaus is a noble reprimand to thoſe who ſuffer themſelves to grow old in riots and debaucheries. Early he quitted the levities of youth; and as the ſilver ſwan, emerging from the ſtream, ſhakes off the drops that hang upon it's wings, ſo Dorilaus but dipped into the follies of the times, juſt taſted the licentious pleaſures of the town, then deſpiſed and threw them from him with abhorrence. Temptations of every kind have ſince ſurrounded him, yet has he ſtill remained unmoved; equally inflexible to the inſinuations of luxury, and to the bribes of corruption. Steady in virtuous principles, the evil ones at length grew weary of their fruitleſs labour, and now ſuffer him to enjoy a calm and undiſturbed repoſe, in the ſociety of a few ſelect friends, who join with him in commiſerating the infatuation of others.

If there were no cards nor dice in the world, Favonius would be looked upon as an almoſt faultleſs being, and the voice of envy have nothing wherewith to caſt a blemiſh on his name. It cannot be denied, however, that Favonius has wit, honour, generoſity, affability, and an unaffected ſweetneſs of diſpoſition: qualifications which would greatly compenſate for his love of gaming, if it were not for two conſiderations, which are theſe. Firſt, That by indulging this unhappy propenſity, he laviſhes too much of that time which might be employed in the defence of the liberties of his country, and for the benefit of the commonwealth. Secondly, That his high character in the world makes many people ready, and even proud, to follow his example in this the ſole error of which he can be accuſed, while they neglect the leaſt endeavour to imitate any one of the numerous virtues he is maſter of.

There are many others of both ſexes ſtill living, whoſe characters would reflect honour on the imitators; and ſome who, though the world has been ſo unfortunate as to loſe, have left behind them ſuch monuments of their virtues as never can be forgotten; their memory ſtrikes a damp on guilt, and will be eternally venerated by all the wiſe and good. But this is a theme which, though perhaps little affecting to the greateſt part of my readers, may yet be too melancholy to ſome others, as well as to myſelf; I ſhall therefore dwell no longer upon it, but return to a ſubject more ſuitable to the preſent diſpoſition of the times, which I am not ſo ignorant as not to know an author ought always to conſult, if he regards either his own reputation, or the intereſt of his bookſeller.

CHAP. VII.

GIVES A SUCCINCT RELATION OF TWO PRETTY EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES THAT PRESENTED THEMSELVES TO THE AUTHOR IN A MORNING RAMBLE.

A Clear and undiſturbed ſky, illuminated with a ſmiling ſun, and perfumed with a thouſand odours from the new-budding ſpring, invited me to Hyde Park. I girded my inviſible Belt about me, for the reaſons I have already mentioned in a preceding chapter; and alſo put my Tablets in my pocket, though I had not the leaſt expectation of meeting with any thing in that place which ſhould give me occaſion to make uſe of them. The ſweet ſolemnity of this ſolitude afforded me infinitely more pleaſure than ever I had found in a crouded Mall: it inſpired me with the

moſt delightful ideas; which indulging, I wandered for I believe near two hours, without meeting with any one object to interrupt my contemplations. How much longer I might have continued in in this agreeable reverie, I know not; for I was rouzed from it by the ſudden appearance of a gentleman at ſome diſtance from me, but who was advancing directly towards the path where I was. On his approach, I ſtepped a little on one ſide, to prevent his running againſt me. He walked backwards and forwards with ſome emotion, looked often on his watch, and diſcovered many ſigns of the utmoſt impatience. By the cockade in his hat, I doubted not of his being a military gentleman, and imagined that ſome diſpute of honour was that morning to be decided by the ſword; but I was ſoon convinced of my miſtake, the officer having more of Cupid than of Mars in his head.

I had not been many minutes, before a coach came up, and ſtopped very near the place where I ſtood. There were three women in it; one of whom, and much the richeſt dreſſed, I preſently knew to be the celebrated Lipathea: the others, as I afterwards found, were her woman and nurſe; this, it ſeems, being the firſt time of her coming abroad ſince her bringing into the world a ſon and heir, to the great joy of that honourable family, as the news writers expreſs it. On ſight of the coach, the young officer advanced briſkly towards it. Lipathea ſaw him at the ſame time; and, thruſting out her head, and half her body, with her accuſtomed loud laugh, called to him to come in. With theſe words, the door was immediately opened; the two women came out, and the officer jumped in: after which, the coachman was ordered to drive, as ſlow as he could, to the Walnut-tree Walk, and ſo round to the Ha-ha Wall, and back to the ſame place again.

I had no opportunity to follow them, ſo was obliged to content myſelf with hearing the diſcourſe that paſſed between the two women who were left behind. To this end I kept as cloſe to them as I could, with my Tablets in my hand; but the ſubjects they talked on were ſo trifling, that I did not think it worth while to ſpread them for the impreſſion of their words, till all at once the nurſe began to run into a long detail of the particulars ſhe knew, or could remember, that had happened in the ſeveral families where ſhe had been; but the matters ſhe related being wholly inſignificant, and unworthy of record, I ſhut up my Tablets, and gave no farther ear to what ſhe ſaid. I quitted not the place, however, till the lovers returned from the tour they had been making. The coach ſtopped, and the captain was ſet down near the end of the ſame path where he had been taken up; and Lipathea beckoned her two attendants to come in, who by this time, I found, were heartily weary of their promenade.

The well-known character of Lipathea, one would think, ſhould have hindered me from being much ſurprized at any thing ſhe did; yet could I not be an eye-witneſs of the glaring affront ſhe now put upon her huſband, and the modeſty of her ſex, without being ſeized with a conſternation impoſſible to be expreſſed. My meditations on this adventure had perhaps laſted till I came home, if they had not been interrupted by another which fell in my way, and afforded me, in it's conſequences, more matter for diverſion than the former. Beauty, or what is more than beauty, the power of attraction, is not confined to perſons of a high ſtation: Nature can exert herſelf as much in the cottage as the palace; and we ſometimes find more real graces under a plain, homely coif, than under a fine gauze cap ornamented with jewels; as the little incident I am about to rehearſe will abundantly evince.

As I was paſſing through St. James's Park, I met a young woman with a porringer in her hand, neatly covered with a large earthen ſaucer. She advanced with ſlow and cautious ſteps, leſt ſhe ſhould ſpill any part of what ſhe had brought. When ſhe drew near the Parade, a tall grenadier, who I found was her huſband, ſtepped forth from among his comrades, and received the meſs from her, as alſo a pewter ſpoon, which ſhe took out of her pocket, and gave to him at the ſame time. Though every thing about her was clean, yet the reader may eaſily ſuppoſe extremely mean: ſhe had a face, however, that ſtood in need of no advantages from dreſs to ſet it off. Never had I ſeen a finer pair of eyes, or a more ſoft and delicate complexion; and, to crown all the reſt of her perfections, there appeared, not only in her countenance, but in every little motion and geſture, that which, in my opinion, is the

the very soul of loveliness—a most perfect innocence and simplicity. I was not, however, the only admirer whom her charms had that morning attracted; a certain officer of distinction, walking on the Parade with another gentleman, having seen her at some distance, quitted his companion, and came to the grenadier, accosting him in these terms—

Officer. So, grenadier, you are taking your morning's refreshment. Is this pretty damsel your wife?

Grenadier. Yes, please your honour.

Officer. She seems very young: you can't have been married long.

Grenadier. About three months, please your honour.

Officer. I hope you use her well; I dare say she deserves it.

Grenadier. I think she has no reason to complain, Sir.—Have you, Peggy?

Wife. No, indeed.

Officer. I am glad of it. I would always have the women used well.

He said no more, but turned upon his heel, and walked away with a careless air, as if nothing farther than what he had made shew of was in his head; but I perceived he removed no farther than the end of the Canal, and kept an observant eye on those he had left behind. The grenadier having finished his little repast, mingled with some soldiers who were on the Parade, and his wife tripped out of the Park with much more haste than she had come into it. The officer, who had never lost sight of her, followed, though for a while at some distance; and I kept very near him, resolving to see what it was he aimed at, and what would be the issue of his designs, in case he had any of the nature I suspected. She went through the Treasury; and when he saw she had entered there, he mended his pace; and coming up with her under the arched passage, gave her a little slap on the shoulder: she started, and turned back; but, on seeing him, dropped a low curtsey, while he spoke thus—

Officer. Well overtaken, pretty lass. I wanted to speak with you: I fancy I have seen you somewhere or other. Pray what countrywoman are you?

Wife. I was born in Lancashire, so please your honour.

Officer. I thought so; for I have heard say all the Lancashire girls are very handsome. And pray what brought you to London?

Wife. The hopes of getting into a good service, please your honour; but not hearing of one presently, and happening to get acquainted with my husband in the mean time, I changed my condition.

Officer. You did well: there is nothing like being your own mistress. But you country folks are generally afraid of a red coat: how came you to venture on a soldier?

Wife. I don't know, Sir: it was my fate, I think.

Officer. Well, here is something to encourage you to love the army.

With these words he drew a six-and-thirty piece of gold out of his pocket, and made an offer of putting it into her hand; but she drew back, either ashamed or unwilling to accept it, and cried—'Oh, Sir, I have heard say that wo-'men should never take money from the 'men!' To which he replied—'That 'is from your mean, dirty fellows; but 'it is ill-manners to refuse any thing 'given you by your superiors.' He now took hold of her hand; and a second effort obliging her to receive his present, she looked on it, turned it two or three times, and then said—'Bless 'me! what must I do with this great 'piece of money?'

Officer. Oh, you will find a use for it; that pretty face of yours requires a thousand things that the grenadier's pay will not enable him to purchase for you. And, now I think on it, 'tis pity he should continue in that low station: I have it in my power to raise him, and I will do it; he shall have a halbert forthwith. But I must talk to you a little first on that score. Where do you live? I will come and see you.

Wife. Oh, dear Sir, we have not a place fit for your honour to come into.

Officer. No matter for that. I am not proud; and never scruple to go to any place, how mean soever it be, where I can either do a pleasure to myself, or a service to my friends; therefore no excuses.

Wife. Your honour is very good. But I do not know how to tell you, for there is no sign near us. We lodge up one pair of stairs, at a button-maker's, the next door but one to a chandler's shop, in a little alley that turns out of King Street by a green stall, and is no thoroughfare.

Officer. I shall never find it by this direction; you shall shew me where it is now.

Wife. Lord, Sir, what will the people in the street say, to see me go cheek-by-jole with such a fine gentleman as your honour?

Officer. Well, then, you shall walk before, and I will follow you.

Wife. But, Sir, my room is all dirty; I was just going home to clean it, now I have carried my husband his breakfast.

Officer. I shall not go in, nor visit you, till after dark; to hinder, as you say, the neighbours from staring at me. I will come this evening, about nine or ten o'clock. Your husband is to be upon duty, but do you take care not to be out of the way; for it is absolutely necessary I should have some discourse with you before I do any thing for him.

Wife. Lord, Sir, what business can your honour have with me that he must not know!

Officer. You may tell him afterwards, if you will. But I won't detain you any longer; go home and please yourself that your husband shall be a serjeant to-morrow, and that I shall raise him still higher, so that he may come to be a captain at last.

Wife. A captain!—Oh la! I should never have thought of such a thing!

Officer. It all depends upon yourself, and what I have to communicate to you; so be sure be at home, and alone when I come.

Wife. Yes, please your honour. I would not, for all the world, be so rude as to disappoint you; though I am ashamed you should come into such a poor habitation as mine.

Officer. Never mind that, my pretty one; I shall look on nothing in the place but yourself.

While he was speaking this, he cast his eyes about, and finding there was nobody in sight, gave her a kiss; after which she made a low curtsey, and turned away to go home, blushing all the way she went like the sun through a gentle shower in an April morning. He followed, as he said he would, till he had seen her enter into her little dwelling; nor left the place, till he had taken sufficient notice of every thing, to be able to remember and know it again. I was now under a most sensible concern for this poor young creature, thus likely to be betrayed; not by any inclination to ill, but merely through the fear of offending a person above her: quite ignorant of the snares of the world, and untaught how to resist temptation, she was, alas! just ready to fall into a real fault, by an endeavour to avoid an imaginary one. As Mr. Waller said, though on a different occasion—

> 'Innocence and youth oft makes,
> 'In artless virgins such mistakes.'

Though I had not the least doubt but that the young wife of the grenadier would become a prey to the vicious inclination of her seducer, yet I had the curiosity to see in what manner she would behave on the full discovery of his designs upon her. Accordingly, I went about nine o'clock to the little alley, and posted myself on a bench at a door just opposite to the dwelling of the grenadier, resolving to go in with the officer when he should come. I had not waited above half an hour before he appeared: he was muffled up in his cloak; but, by the help of a small winking light from an adjacent shop, I easily knew him. He had taken too much notice of the house to be mistaken in it, and entered directly, the door being left open, as I suppose, for that purpose. I followed close behind him; but never had my Invisibilityship been in so much danger as it was now brought into by this adventure.

The grenadier, it seems, having been informed by his wife of every thing that had passed between her and the officer, and more zealous in the defence of his honour than perhaps some in a much higher station would have been, had prevailed, for some pots of beer, on a brother grenadier to do duty for him that night, so returned home before the hour appointed for his rival's approach; and having armed himself with a good oaken cudgel, stood on the middle of the stairs, ready to give a proper reception to that invader of his rights. My leader had not advanced above five or six steps of the stairs, when he received a violent blow on the head; which, together with the surprize it gave him, made him reel back, and like to fall on the poor Invisible; but I hastily and prudently withdrew to the middle of the entry, and stood aloof, to hear, at a more safe distance, what would be the end of this affair. The grenadier pursued his strokes; and the officer,

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officer, being in no condition to defend himself in that disadvantageous posture, thought it best to make his escape; but not having been accustomed to such steep winding stairs, fell down to the bottom. His antagonist, though better acquainted with the passage, in attempting to follow him, had the same fate; but being uppermost, soon recovered himself; and catching hold of the officer by the collar as he was endeavouring to rise, forced him on his knees, and continued buffeting him on the head and face till he was covered all over with the blood that gushed from his nose and mouth, as I afterwards perceived.

The officer made several efforts to draw his sword, and at length did so; but the other finding what he was about, immediately seized it by the hilt, wrested it from him, snapped it asunder with his foot, and threw it over his head. 'Rascal, 'will you murder me!' cried the officer. 'No,' replied the grenadier; 'I will only 'cool your courage, and make you remember running after other men's 'wives.'—'Dog! do you know who I 'am?' demanded he. 'I only know you 'for a villain,' said the other, 'that 'would debauch my wife, and as such 'I'll use you.'—'Sirrah,' returned the officer, 'I will make you pay dearly for 'this insolence! You know well 'enough that I am ******.'—'You 'lye!' rejoined the other, 'and deserve 'to be hanged for taking such a gen'tleman's name in your mouth! ****** 'would scorn to sneak into such a poor 'hut as this, to seduce any man's wife.' The grenadier's hands were not idle all this time: but the officer having at length got upon his feet, they continued wrestling together for some minutes, in which combat the furious husband had much the better; which put me in mind of what Mr. Rowe says in Jane Shore—

'In spite of birth and dignity, a man
'Oppos'd against a man, is but a man.'

The officer now finding himself quite disabled, and being still under the gripe of his unrelenting enemy, called vehemently out for help; on which several of the neighbours ran in with lighted candles in their hands, and the entry was presently full of men, women, and children; but never was such a spectacle as this demolished beau. 'Bless me! 'what is the matter?' cried one; 'what 'is the matter?'—'Ask no questions. 'Here is half a crown for any one that 'will get me a chair immediately,' said he; and the word was scarce out of his mouth, before a cobler ran with all the speed he could, to do as he desired. The grenadier now affected the utmost surprize, and said—'All the world should 'never have made me believe it was your 'honour! I protest I took you for a 'rogue that wanted to come to bed to 'my wife while I was abroad, and 'thought I could not use such a one 'too ill.' The women, on hearing this, guessed how the business was, and looked at one another, and grinned: one of them, however, was so charitable, as to fetch a bowl of water, to wash the blood off his face and garments. He made use off what she brought, but gave no other answer to what the grenadier had said, than a look full of resentment and confusion.

A chair being brought, he catched up his hat and wig, which had fallen off in the scuffle, went into it, leaving behind him sufficient matter to employ the conversation of the whole alley for a considerable time. On hearing afterwards the whole truth of the affair from the grenadier and his wife, every one applauded the conduct of them both, and laughed heartily at the disappointment and correction of the lascivious officer. For my own part, after I got home, the satisfaction of finding myself safe from the dangers into which my curiosity had brought me, was succeeded by some considerations on the passages I had been witness of; and I could not help being filled with the utmost astonishment, that persons endowed with a liberal education, and from whom much better things might be expected, should, for the sake of gratifying a foolish inclination, the fleeting pleasure of a moment, not only be guilty of the greatest injustice to others, but also of the most abject demeaning of themselves.

CHAP. VIII.

IS CALCULATED RATHER FOR ADMONITION THAN ENTERTAINMENT, AND THEREFORE LIKELY TO BE BUT LITTLE RELISHED.

HOW vainly do we boast the light of reason, when we refuse to submit either our wills or actions to the guidance

guidance of it's direction; when, through every ſtage of life, we ſuffer ſome darling paſſion to gain dominion over us, and utterly extinguiſh that glorious lamp we ſeem ſo proud of, and would be thought ſo eminently to poſſeſs above the reſt of the creation! Prodigality is generally the vice of youth, and avarice of age: but though both theſe propenſities proceed from a wrong turn of mind, and are diametrically oppoſite to ſound judgment, yet I think ſomewhat more be ſaid in excuſe of the one than of the other. The prodigal laviſhes his ſtores in ſuch things as do a pleaſure to himſelf; and if he ſquanders away his patrimony in riotous living, and becomes miſerable in the end, there are ſome who profit by his misfortunes; his money circulates, and the publick ſuffer nothing by his private ruin. The miſer, on the contrary, not only denies himſelf all enjoyment of the goods of fortune, but alſo withholds them, as much as in his power, from every one elſe: he parts with nothing he can get into his clutches; amaſſes heaps of treaſure; and ſmiles, with a wicked ſatisfaction, to ſee it lie ruſting in his coffers, while numbers of his fellow-creatures are periſhing for want of it.

Avarice, above all other paſſions, ſo takes up the ſoul, that it leaves not the leaſt room for any of the nobler ſenſations. Love, friendſhip, pity, and even natural affection, are excluded thence. The covetous man regards only the gratification of that one ſordid view; all his fears, his hopes, his cares, are centered there, and he ſeldom ſticks at any thing to obtain it. Beſides, what can be more abſurd in itſelf, than for people to labour with all their might in heaping riches which they neither uſe, nor can aſſure themſelves but that the next moment may diſpoſſeſs them of? And it is remarkable, that the nearer they approach to the time when they can expect no other than to be ſnatched for ever from the idol they had worſhipped, they grow the more eager to preſerve it. The condition of thoſe children who have the misfortune to be deſcended from parents of the humour I am ſpeaking of, can never be too much commiſerated, eſpecially if they happen to be born with notions more juſt and elevated; an inſtance of which kind I am now going to relate.

A gentleman, whom I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Avario, is ſprung from a very ancient family in the weſt of England, has a large eſtate, and might have been beloved and reſpected by his neighbours, if the exceſſive parſimoniouſneſs of his diſpoſition did not make him do things which demean his rank, and even render him contemptible in the eyes both of his equals and inferiors. He was married, in his youth, to a lady of birth and fortune, but had no child for near twelve years; at the end of which time, however, ſhe brought a ſon into the world; which, one would imagine, ſhould have filled the father's heart with the higheſt ſatisfaction; but, inſtead of thanking Providence for ſending him an heir of his own bowels for his eſtate, he only repined at the additional expence the new comer muſt neceſſarily occaſion. His lady was ſenſibly afflicted at the little notice he took of the young Clyamon, for ſo the ſon of this unworthy father was called; but when ſhe reproached him with his unkindneſs, he only gave her this churliſh anſwer—That he ſaw no cauſe for any great rejoicing; for he ſuppoſed, as ſhe had now began to teem, he ſhould in a few years have more children than he ſhould be able to maintain.

Clyamon, notwithſtanding, grew a very fine boy; but would have had little to boaſt of from education, if his uncle by the mother's ſide, who was exceeding rich, and had no children, had not conceived a more than ordinary affection for him, and reſolved to beſtow on him all thoſe advantages which were denied to him by the niggard diſpoſition of his father. He told Avario, that if he would truſt him with his ſon, he would breed him as his own, and take care he ſhould want for none of thoſe accompliſhments which conſtitute the truly fine gentleman, in caſe he were capable of receiving them; 'Which,' added he, 'I do not at all doubt of, from 'the early promiſe of his childhood.' This offer was too agreeable to both the parents not to be readily accepted: the father rejoiced at being eaſed of an expence he could not foreſee without regret; and the mother was highly pleaſed to think that her little darling would now receive a more polite education than ſhe could hope the too great frugality of her huſband would have allowed him.

Clyamon was about ten years of age when Sir Arthur Frankwill, for ſo this worthy

worthy uncle was called, took him under his protection, and carried him to a fine ſeat he had about twelve miles diſtant from Avario's. Doubly happy for him was now this change in his ſituation; for his mother dying ſoon after his removal, he would doubtleſs have been deprived of many indulgences he had hitherto enjoyed at home, but which were abundantly made up to him by the tender affection he was treated with by the good baronet. Sir Arthur, not approving of any of the ſchools in that part of the country, ſent him to Eton, under the conduct of a faithful old ſervant; and in that place it was he received his firſt rudiments of learning. The improvements he made there were ſuch as did honour to the maſters, as well as to his own capacity. The accounts thoſe gentlemen gave of him, in their letters to Sir Arthur, were confirmed by their pupil's behaviour whenever the times of breaking up gave him the liberty of going into the country. Both uncle and father were ſurprized on finding the ſwift progreſs he made in his learning; the one was charmed with the ſucceſs of his endeavours, and the other quite tranſported that his ſon was in a fair way of being poſſeſſed of ſo many accompliſhments without any coſt to himſelf.

Having perfected himſelf in all he could be taught at Eton, he quitted the ſchool, by his uncle's permiſſion, and returned to the weſt; where, after having ſtaid ſome time to make an acquaintance with the gentry, and take ſuch diverſions as the country afforded, his uncle thought proper he ſhould finiſh his ſtudies at one of the univerſities, and, for ſome reaſons which he had within himſelf, made choice of Oxford. Clyamon accordingly went thither at the age of eighteen, and had the good fortune to have for his tutor a gentleman of deep learning, a keen diſcernment, and an unprejudiced judgment; who inſpired him with ſuch principles of juſtice and true honour as I believe he will never depart from. The admonitions of this worthy tutor, joined to a natural love of virtue in himſelf, entirely preſerved him from running into any of thoſe exceſſes too many of his age are guilty of: though nothing could be more gay and ſpirituous, yet every thing he ſaid or did was governed by a certain decorum, without ſeeming to be ſo. He could be chearful among the men of his acquaintance, without immorality or prophaneneſs; courtly among the ladies, without flattery or inſincerity; reſpectful to his ſuperiors, and maintain a proper diſtance to thoſe below him without pride or ill-nature. In fine, his character and manners were ſuch as made him highly eſteemed by all the wiſe and good, and beloved even by thoſe who would not be at the pains to imitate him.

After a ſtay of about three years at the univerſity, he returned to Sir Arthur's; for that kind uncle and patron would neeſs have him continue to look upon his houſe as his chief home: nor did Avario at all oppoſe this motion, though he was now extremely proud of his ſon, went often to ſee him, and would always make him be preſent at every publick aſſembly or meeting in which he was himſelf a party. It is certain, indeed, never any young gentleman was more happy or contented in his mind than Clyamon at the time I am ſpeaking of; he had but one wiſh beyond what he already poſſeſſed, and that remained no longer ungratified than while he forbore to mention it. He was as well acquainted, as books could make him, with moſt foreign parts, eſpecially with thoſe kingdoms and ſtates which compoſe this quarter of the globe; but when he conſidered that the beſt deſcription cannot but fall infinitely ſhort of the proſpect, he was very deſirous of being an eye-witneſs of thoſe things and places he had read of.

Sir Arthur highly approved of his nephew's inclination to travel; it ſeemed laudable to him, as he had himſelf often thought it was the only thing wanting to compleat his other accompliſhments: and one day, as they were talking on that ſubject—'My dear Clyamon,' ſaid he, 'the deſire you have of ſeeing the 'world is truly praiſe worthy, and I 'think you cannot better employ two 'or three of thoſe years which I hope 'Heaven has allotted for you, than in 'viſiting the ſeveral courts of Europe: 'it will enlarge your ideas; and the 'difference of their manners and poli'cies will, I doubt not, enable you to 'make ſuch obſervations as may here'after be of ſervice to your country. 'I think,' purſued he, 'there is no ne'ceſſity for putting you under the care 'of any perſon by way of governor; 'you are now arrived at years, and, I

'flatter

'flatter myself, at discretion enough to be 'trusted by yourself: as to the rest, you 'may depend that I shall spare nothing 'to render the tour you make agreeable 'to you; and that, whatever remittances you shall have occasion for, 'from time to time, shall be punctually 'sent to you, on a letter of advice.'

This crowned all the other favours Clyamon had received from his indulgent uncle; and, it is not to be doubted, drew from him the most grateful acknowledgments. It was necessary, however, Avario should be consulted: the matter accordingly was proposed to him; on which he testified that he was not void of natural affection, by the reluctance he expressed for exposing so deserving a son to the dangers of travelling; but the arguments urged by Sir Arthur, and the entreaties of Clyamon, at length prevailed on him to consent. Clyamon soon made it appear that it was not to gratify a vain, unprofitable curiosity, but the laudable ambition of improving his mind, that had made him so desirous of going abroad. The letters he wrote to his father and uncle, from France, Italy, Sweden, and several parts of Germany, would have been very well worth inserting in this work; but, to the misfortune of the publick, I was not then in possession of my wonderful Tablets; and though I heard them read more than once, can remember little of the particulars they contain. This worthy young gentleman had gleaned from every field he passed through whatever he found capable of increasing the treasures of his mind; and, in somewhat more than two years, returned to England, full fraught, though not burthened, with understanding, and an experience far above his years.

I might here entertain my reader with the joy he was received with by his father and uncle, the compliments made to him by the gentry in that part of the country, and acclamations of the lower sort of people; but I have no time to waste in such minute particulars, and must proceed to more material circumstances. Clyamon had no great relish for the country; he soon grew weary of it's amusements: he loved company, and had been accustomed to a good deal, both at Oxford, as well as while he was on his travels; and, on account of the great distance between the gentlemen's seats in that country, his uncle's love of retirement, and his father's parsimony, neither of their houses were much frequented. He wanted to come to London; he had never been three whole weeks together in it, and thought he ought to be better acquainted with what was done in the capital of the kingdom. Sir Arthur was also willing he should be known in a place where the accomplishments he had given him might be rendered more conspicuous; but as he had more than performed the part of an uncle, and fully discharged him of the promise he had made to Avario concerning his education, he thought it was now high time for that gentleman to take upon him the father, and make a settlement for his son sufficient to enable him to appear in the world according to the estate he was born to inherit. This proposition was not altogether so pleasing to Avario as it ought to have been; but as he could find nothing to alledge against the reasonableness of it, he only evaded complying with it at present by some trifling excuse or other, till Clyamon, unable to conceal his discontent, Sir Arthur pressed more strenuously in his favour than he had done before, and at length, though with much difficulty, drew from that niggardly parent the scanty sum of fifty guineas. This was a light loading for the purse of a young gentleman bred in the manner Clyamon had been, and could not be expected to hold out long in so expensive a town as London. Avario, however, accompanied it with a promise of letting him have more as soon as he received money from his tenants, who, he pretended, had been tardy in their payments of late, and occasioned his being very much out of cash.

Clyamon could not keep himself from being extremely shocked at this treatment from a father who had been at no expence for him since he was ten years old. Sir Arthur was no less chagrined, though he concealed it from his nephew; and putting a Bank bill of fifty pounds into his hand, said to him—

'My dear Clyamon, I would not have 'you be disconcerted. You know your 'father's temper; but the more he 'hoards, the more will be your own at 'his decease. In the mean time, be 'assured I will not forsake you; I will 'continually urge him on your behalf, 'and also privately supply you when-'ever he is deficient: live therefore like 'yourself,

, yourself, and be entirely easy.' These comfortable words, from a mouth on which he knew he might depend, made Clyamon set out chearfully for London; but what happened to him after his arrival, must be the subject of another chapter.

CHAP. IX.

IS A CONTINUANCE OF WHAT THE FORMER BUT BEGAN.

THOUGH Clyamon never had an opportunity of making much acquaintance in this metropolis, and now arrived here at a season in which great part of the nobility and gentry retire to their country seats, yet was he soon known, and his conversation courted by those of the best rank who still remained in town. There were no operas indeed, no plays, no masquerades, to entertain him, but the gardens of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and Mary-le-bon; or, to speak more properly, the gay company that frequent those places left him no want of any other amusement. The love of pleasure can never continue ungratified in a town like this; and it is not to be wondered at, if it sometimes got the better of all Clyamon's discretion; nor, if surrounded with temptations, that he could not always keep himself from giving way to passions which, in youth, and a sprightly disposition, are so natural, that they scarce deserve the name of faults. It is not my business to detain the reader's attention with an account of his gallantries with the fair-sex, if any of the particulars had come to my knowledge, which I freely confess they did not; I shall only say, that he had no amour which could call his honour in question, bring him into quarrels, or be productive of any other unhappy consequences.

The only mistake in conduct he had any great reason to repent of, he was led into more by the prevalence of example than inclination. He had never been in the least tainted with that epidemick vice the love of gaming, and rather wondered at the pleasure he saw it give others, than desired to be a partaker of it himself; yet did he inadvertently suffer himself one evening to engage in a party at that dangerous amusement, which he knew had proved so fatal to many of the most opulent fortunes, and utterly unsuitable to a person in his present circumstances. The persons he played with were well experienced, and great proficients in their arts: they let him win at first some pieces; and this imaginary success luring him to go on, he became at length a loser of about seventy pounds; a trifling sum to a gentleman of his appearance, yet three times more than he at that time was master of.

He dissembled his chagrin as well as he was able, but confessed he had not that sum about him, and would send it the next morning: on which they told him his honour was a sufficient stake for ten times as much as he had lost, and would fain have prevailed with him to have played on; but he now saw the folly he had been guilty of, so pretending he had business, took leave of the company, carrying with him a humour very different from what he had brought, and from what he had ever been possessed of in his whole life before. Impossible is it to express, as he afterwards told me, how much he was disconcerted at this unlucky event: he knew it was expected he should promise to send the money next morning, and by what means he should acquit himself of that promise, and redeem his honour, puzzled him to a degree that made him almost distracted. He has often protested that he never closed his eyes in sleep during that whole night, but passed his restless hours in contriving how to extricate himself from the labyrinth into which he had so foolishly strayed. After much revolving in his mind, he at last bethought himself of borrowing the sum he wanted of a young gentleman with whom he was extremely intimate, and had a good fortune.

Pursuant to this resolution, he rose the next morning more early than he was accustomed, and went to his friend, who was not yet stirring; but on saying he had business of importance to impart to him, was easily admitted to his chamber. He told him, in few words, what had happened, the vexatious situation he was in, and the necessity he was under of borrowing a small sum, till he could receive a remittance from the country; to which the other replied—'Upon my 'soul, dear Clyamon, I should be glad 'to serve you on this occasion, but, 'faith, it is not in my power at present; 'it is not a week ago since I lost five

'hundred pounds at that damned whift; 'and this, with fome other demands 'lately made upon me, have quite 'drained me of all my ready cafh. But 'I will tell you what I can do for you; 'I know a man who has often fupplied 'me, and feveral of my acquaintance, 'when they have had a bad run at play. 'He has always money by him, and 'will lend you what fum you pleafe on 'your advancing a premium. I will 'rife this minute, and go with you to 'him.'

Clyamon was highly pleafed at this offer; and, while the other was dreffing, reflecting within himfelf how his affairs ftood, and that the little prefents he had received from his father and uncle being now almoft exhaufted, he fhould foon have calls for more money than his gaming debt; thought it beft, fince he muft borrow, to borrow as much as would fupply his expences till his father fhould be prevailed upon to make him a fettlement, which he flattered himfelf would be in a fhort time. He communicated his intention to the gentleman, who approved it; and having got himfelf ready, they went together to old Grub, for fo the ufurer was called. The wretch was juft coming out of his houfe when they came to it. On feeing them, he turned back, and conducted them into a little dirty parlour; but as the difcourfe that paffed between them was fomewhat extraordinary, I thought it worth writing down, as Clyamon fome time after repeated it to me word for word.

Grub. So, my young fquire!—'Tis a wonder to fee you out of your bed before the fun has run three quarters of his courfe at leaft. I fuppofe you want a little of my affiftance; that brings you abroad thus early.

Gentleman. No, faith, Grub, not at prefent; but I have a friend here that does.

Grub. Your friend is welcome; I will ferve him if I can.—Pray, Sir, what can I do for you?

Clyamon. Sir, a prefent emergency lays me under a neceffity of raifing two hundred pounds immediately; if you have that fum by you, this gentleman will inform you who I am, and that I want neither the power nor the will to difcharge any obligation I fhall enter into on that fcore.

Gentleman. Aye, aye, Grub, his note is as good as the Bank of England; you need not fear your money. His name is ****; he is an only fon, and heir to near two thoufand pounds a year.

Grub. The gentleman has an honeft face, indeed.

Gentleman. If you have any fcruple, Grub, I will join in the note with all my foul.

Grub. I believe there is no great occafion; only in cafe of accidents a collateral fecurity may be neceffary.

Gentleman. Well, well, you fhall have it.

Grub. I fuppofe, Sir, you have acquainted the gentleman with the common way of dealing in thefe affairs?

Clyamon. Sir, I am willing to allow you any intereft for your money that you can in reafon defire.

Grub. Sir, I am never out of reafon with any man. As to intereft, it is quite out of the queftion; I fhall take no more than what the law allows: but when we advance money upon a pinch, a certain premium is expected.

Clyamon. Pleafe to name it.

Grub. Let me fee—you want two hundred pounds immediately, you fay. It is but a trifling fum, indeed; but too much for a poor man like me to lofe: we who lend money this way run a great rifque. Not that I doubt you, nor am unwilling to advance the money; but I think you can do no lefs than add an odd fifty in the note you make.

Clyamon. How, Sir! fifty pounds for the loan of two hundred, befides the intereft!

Grub. Lookye, Sir, I would not have you imagine I deal hardly with you. If you brought me a note on the beft tradefman in the city, payable one month after date, I do affure you that I would not difcount it a farthing lefs than twenty per cent. Confider, Sir, I may lie a great while out of my money. Difappointments fometimes happen; and when they do, I have not the heart to be fevere in point of time; I fcorn to diftrefs a gentleman when I find he has it not in his power to pay, unlefs I hear he is going out of the kingdom, or to enter into the army; and then, indeed, it behoves me to take care of myfelf.

Clyamon, in favouring me with the recital of this dialogue, told me, that he had not prefence enough of mind to keep the fhock he felt at fo exorbitant a demand

mand from being visible to the usurer; who looking on him with no very pleasing aspect, said to him—

Grub. I perceive you are dissatisfied, Sir; and if so, I can keep my money, and you may try to supply yourself at a cheaper rate elsewhere. For my part, I am at no loss how to dispose of the little I have: there are enow will be glad to receive it on the terms I offered you; and, it may be, not grumble to allow me a better advantage.

Gentleman. Nay—pshaw—pr'ythee, Grub, don't be out of humour! My friend is not accustomed to these things, and I had not time to inform him before we came.

Grub. Sir, I bear a conscience, and am above imposing on any one. I am ashamed to think of what is practised at some great coffee-houses that shall be nameless; where, if a gentleman is necessitated to borrow ten pieces, he returns twenty for it the next morning, or, it may be, the same night. No, no; such things are an abomination to me: I desire no more than a living profit; and whoever does not approve of my conditions, is at liberty to reject them; there is no harm done.

Clyamon. Not in the least, Sir: and as this is the first time I ever had occasion to become a borrower, and was utterly ignorant of the methods I should take in such a situation, I may deserve forgiveness.

Thus was poor Clyamon compelled, by his impatience to discharge his debt of honour, to acquiesce to the excuse made for him by his friend, and comply with the extortioner's demand. On which Grub was easily brought into temper again; a note was presently drawn for two hundred and fifty pounds; and being signed by both the gentlemen, the whole sum mentioned in it was delivered to Clyamon, who put two hundred pounds into his pocket, and returned the other fifty to Grub: 'This, 'Sir,' said the old wary curmudgeon, 'I receive as a present from you, and 'thank you for it.' Clyamon also, in his turn, thanked him for the favour he had just conferred upon him; after which they departed, seemingly with the most perfect good-will towards each other: but it is a truth almost unquestionable, that the lender of this money had infinitely more satisfaction in his mind than the borrower could possibly have. Dearly, indeed, did he pay for the means of discharging an obligation which his inadvertency had brought him under: it was, however, of this service to him, that it made him detest high gaming ever since, and careful to avoid all company that might draw him into a second misfortune of the same kind; as I remember to have formerly read in a very old, and now almost exploded author—

'Wise is the man who, by one error taught,
'No more is in the same temptation caught.'

There is a way of refraining from being guilty of indiscreet actions, without affecting to be over wise. Clyamon had this happy talent. He knew very well, that for a person of his years to set up for a dictator, instead of reforming his companions, would only incur their ridicule; and therefore contented himself with not making a party in the modish vices and follies he was spectator of, without seeming to condemn or be displeased at them. Conscious that, on his first arrival in town, he had not taken all the care he should have done to regulate his way of living according to his present circumstances, he began to retrench his expences as much as possibly he could, without letting the world see he did so, or sinking too much beneath the character of a gentleman born to inherit the ample fortune he was. But in spite of this somewhat too late assumed œconomy, he soon found himself in a very great necessity for a fresh supply. He had been in London from the latter end of May to the beginning of October, and had received no remittances from the country since he left it. All his uncle's remonstrances had not yet prevailed upon his father to make the proposed settlement on him: the usurer's loan was quite exhausted; and he had, besides, other small debts to his tradesmen, some of whom had already sent in their bills.

To add to these vexations, Grub visited him almost every day, complained he was out of cash himself, and at length grew very importunate, and plainly told him, that he could lie no longer out of his money, and that if he did not speedily discharge the note, he must take proper measures to force him to it. In this exigence, he wrote a very pressing letter to his father, intreating an order on his banker in London: but the obdurate

Avario only ſent him an anſwer to this effect; that it was inconvenient for him to break into the ſum in the hands of his banker; ſaid he muſt wait awhile; that he ſhould be in town himſelf the enſuing November, on the meeting of parliament, and that then he would do ſomething for him: in the mean time bid him live ſparingly, and ſhun all places and company that might draw him into any unneceſſary expence.

Poor Clyamon had need enough for all that ſtock of ſpirits which nature had endued him with, to enable him to bear up amidſt the perſecutions of his voracious creditors, and the unnatural behaviour of his father. He had now no other reſource remaining, than an application to Sir Arthur; but very loth he was to be troubleſome to that dear and beneficent uncle, to whom alone he was indebted for what he looked upon as infinitely more valuable than his being, his education; and was with much debate within himſelf, whether it were not better to endure the inſults he was expoſed to, rather than run the riſque of diſpleaſing a patron he had ſo much cauſe to love and reverence. But while he continued thus irreſolute in his mind, an accident happened which put a final end to all the contention in his thoughts on that ſcore, by preſenting him with a misfortune, which was the more ſevere, by it's being ſudden and unapprehended.

The good Sir Arthur Frankwill died: Fate ſnatched him from the world at once, without the leaſt previous warning; and allowed no time for the making bequeſts, either to his beloved Clyamon, or any other perſon, who elſe he might have thought worthy of a place in his remembrance; ſo that leaving no will behind him, his whole eſtate, together with all the perſonal effects he was poſſeſſed of, devolved on a ſon of his elder ſiſter, as being the firſt of blood, and heir at law; a gentleman who had always looked upon Clyamon with too envious an eye to have any ſincere friendſhip for him. The firſt account of this misfortune was tranſmitted to Clyamon in a letter from the above-mentioned kinſman, and contained the following lines—

'DEAR COUSIN,

'THIS comes to acquaint you with 'the loſs we both ſuſtain by the 'death of our dear uncle, who departed 'this life ſix days ago. He was ſeized 'with an apoplectick fit, out of which 'he never recovered, in ſpite of all the 'endeavours that could be uſed. I did 'not ſend to deſire your company at 'the funeral, as it would have been a 'ſuperfluous compliment to him, and 'a great fatigue and expence to your'ſelf in coming ſo long a journey; but 'as I am ſenſible of the affection he had 'always for you, I incloſe a Bank bill 'of twenty pounds for mourning. I 'intend to diſpoſe of my uncle's houſe 'as ſoon as I can hear of a purchaſer, 'and am now ſending away all the fur'niture, ſo can make no invitation to 'you to come hither; but ſhall be glad 'if you paſs a few days with me at 'T——, on your return into the coun'try. So the hurry I am in at preſent, 'permits me to add no more, than that 'I am, &c.

'G. HAWKSMORE.'

It is certain, at this time, and indeed almoſt at any other, there were few things could have happened more unfortunately for Clyamon than the death of his uncle; as he had not only loſt in him an indulgent parent, a tender friend, and a kind protector, who had promiſed never to forſake him, but alſo the only perſon in the world who had the moſt influence over his father, and by whoſe interceſſion he hoped to have been ſoon relieved from the precarious ſituation he was at preſent in. He had ſcarce time enough to recover himſelf from the firſt emotions of grief, on the above-mentioned melancholy account, when he received private intelligence that Grub intended to arreſt him, and had even employed a ſheriff's officer for that purpoſe. He had no way to prevent this affront but by flying for refuge to the verge of the court; which he accordingly did, and took a lodging in Scotland Yard. Grub ſoon heard of his retreat; traced him to his aſylum; and endeavoured, by all the means he could, to render it of no ſervice to him: but Clyamon had laid his caſe before the board of green cloth, who had aſſured him of their protection, till the arrival of his father ſhould diſcharge this troubleſome affair.

The time was now near in which Avario was expected, and he ſtaid not many days beyond it; but his preſence rather augmented, than put an end to the

the diſtreſs of Clyamon. That unnatural parent, on finding the condition he was in, flew into the extremeſt rage; reproached his extravagancies, as he called them, in the moſt bitter terms; ſwore he would ſee him ſink under the calamity to which he had reduced himſelf, rather than give a ſingle guinea to relieve him from it; and even curſed the memory of the good Sir Arthur, for having indulged him, as he ſaid, in notions ſo contrary to what he ought to have been inſpired with. It was in vain that Clyamon endeavoured to alleviate his fury; he would hearken to no excuſes, be ſoftened by no ſubmiſſions he could make. One of the gentlemen of the honourable board, at Clyamon's requeſt, urged the defence of that young gentleman in the ſtrongeſt terms; but Avario for many days continued deaf to all remonſtrances in his behalf, and gave no other anſwer, than that, as his ſon had brought himſelf into this trouble by his folly, he muſt endeavour to get out of it by his wit. This cruel ſarcaſm, when repeated to Clyamon, made him almoſt forget the duty of a ſon; and, as he confeſſed to me, ready to burſt into exclamations which he would afterwards have reproached himſelf for having been guilty of uttering, or even thinking of.

Grub, and ſome other of his creditors, finding they could do no more to him in the place where he was, took their revenge in perſecuting him with unceaſing clamours; which threw him ſometimes into ſuch fits of melancholy, that if he had not been furniſhed with a great ſtock of morality and good ſenſe, would doubtleſs have puſhed him on ſome deſperate method to end thoſe miſfortunes which he ſaw no probability of being removed from. Avario, in the mean time, notwithſtanding his churliſh and ſordid diſpoſition, was far from being eaſy in his mind. The firſt guſt of paſſion being blown over, the merits of Clyamon roſe in oppoſition to the fault he had been guilty of, and made it by degrees ſeem leſs; he could not forbear remembering that he was his ſon, and ſuch a ſon as every one who was a father wiſhed his own might copy after. In fine, nature and reaſon joined their forces, and pleaded ſtrongly in behalf of Clyamon, and almoſt wrought him to forgiveneſs; but as often as he reflected how much it would coſt to pardon him, and that he could not receive him into favour without payment of his debts, the thoughts of parting with his money gave a ſudden check to his paternal inclinations.

At length, however, ſome hints which Clyamon dropped in one of the many petitionary letters he ſent to him, making him apprehenſive that the moſt dreadful conſequences might attend the deſpair of his offending ſon, he became determined to do ſomething for him. He ſent a perſon to him with ten guineas for his preſent ſupport, and an offer of making up his affairs, in caſe he could prevail on his creditors to compound for the one half of what was owing to them. Clyamon accepted of his father's preſent, trifling as it was, with ſubmiſſion; but could not forbear teſtifying the utmoſt diſdain at propoſing of a compoſition; for beſides being certain that it would never be complied with, the thing itſelf appeared to him ſo abject, that he choſe to ſuffer any thing rather than demean himſelf to mention it. This refuſal put Avario into a ſecond flame; but he ſoon cooled again: and, after ſome little conflict within himſelf, the neceſſity there was of reſtoring the liberty of an only ſon, got the better of his love of money. Loth, however, to part with his darling pence as long as there was a poſſibility of keeping them, he found out an expedient to protract the doing a thing ſo irkſome to him: he communicated his intentions to Clyamon in a letter, which that young gentleman ſhewing me afterwards, I found contained words to this effect—

'SON,

'THOUGH I have been juſtly irri-
'tated againſt you, firſt by your
'extravagancies, and ſince by your late
'obſtinacy, yet I cannot forget I am
'your father, nor ſuffer you to ſink be-
'neath thoſe misfortunes your folly
'and diſobedience have brought you
'into. I have reſolved to pay all your
'debts before I leave London; but as it
'is not convenient for me to do it
'ſooner, would not have you venture
'out of the verge, for fear of bringing
'yourſelf into diſgrace, and an addi-
'tional expence on me for your re-
'leaſe. In the mean time, am content
'to allow you two guineas and a half
'per week, for the ſubſiſtence of your-
'ſelf and ſervant. It is expected we
'ſhall

'shall be dissolved about the middle of 'February, when writs will be issued 'out for a new election; and I shall 'then set you clear in the world, and 'take you home with me; for I do not 'think it advisеable you should live in 'this luxurious town, till you are bet-'ter acquainted with the true value of 'money than you seem to be at present. 'I hope, notwithstanding, that your 'future behaviour will atone for the er-'rors of the past, and I shall have no oc-'casion to repent the proof I now give 'you of being your affectionate father,

'AVARIO.'

The joy Clyamon would have felt, on finding full satisfaction would be given to the demands of his impatient creditors, was very much abated by the thoughts of being obliged to reside constantly with his father in the country; as the manner in which he knew he must live would be very disagreeable to his humour, and widely different from what he had been accustomed to with his uncle. It also seemed a little hard to him, that by delaying the discharge of his debts till his departure, he should be secluded from all enjoyment of the pleasures of the town, even while he continued in it: but he saw into the policy of his father in doing this; and, as there was no remedy, endeavoured to be as contented as possible. In the answer he gave to his father's letter, he expressed himself in terms highly pleasing to him, and brought on a perfect reconciliation, as will presently appear, on occasion of an accident which happened soon after.

CHAP. X.

CONCLUDES A NARRATIVE WHICH HAS SOMEWHAT IN IT THAT WILL, IN A MANNER, COMPEL THOSE WHO SHALL BE MOST OFFENDED TO COUNTERFEIT AN APPROBATION, FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR OWN REPUTATION.

THOUGH the greatest intimacy with Clyamon, and a long acquaintance with Avario, made me no stranger even to the minute particulars of the transaction I am relating—I mean as far as I could be informed by the perfect confidence with which I was honoured by both these gentlemen—yet, as no sure dependance can be placed either on what people say of themselves, or the report given of them by others, I should never have ventured to speak so positively in many things as I have done, if the gift of Invisibility had not afforded me an opportunity of accompanying them when they thought themselves entirely alone, and of beholding them in those unguarded attitudes which are the best and only certain discoverers of the inward workings of the human mind.

It was my dear Belt could have alone convinced me that, contrary to the general opinion of the world, it was not ill-nature in Avario, or the ignorance of what he ought to do, which had hindered him from being an affectionate husband, a tender father, a faithful friend, and an indulgent master; but merely his inordinate love of money, and an unaccountable apprehension of being reduced to the want of it, that made him center his whole cares in his bags, regardless of all the ties of blood and nature, and rendered him almost incapable of practising any social virtue.

It was by this beneficial present that I became assured Clyamon was much more worthy than he took any pains to appear; that in all serious matters he was steady and unshaken, and in his pleasures decent and well-mannered; and that, young as he was, he had set up a tribunal in his own heart, where reason presiding as his sole judge, carefully examined all his actions, and whatever unruly passion had got the start, stopped it in it's career, and brought it back to obedience.

Many interesting circumstances relating to this affair between father and son, are lost to the publick by my having been deprived for some time of my Chrystaline Tablets, which had been stolen from me, with several other things of much less, though more seeming value, by an unfaithful servant; but the villain finding, I suppose, that he could make nothing of the Tablets, and looking upon them only as a curiosity which would please nobody so much as myself, sealed them up, and caused them to be left for me at a coffee-house. My joy at getting them again, made me forgive the rest of the robbery, and seek no farther after the thief. I recovered my purloined treasure just about the time that

that Clyamon was in the above-mentioned ſituation; ſo that what remains to be recited of this narrative, will be chiefly taken from the mouths of the perſons concerned in it. I was one morning in Clyamon's apartment, under the cover of my Belt, when a young gentleman of the name of Careleſs came to viſit him. After exchanging the *bon jour*, and ſome other cuſtomary ſalutations, Careleſs began the converſation between them in theſe terms—

Careleſs. Where do you think I was yeſterday?

Clyamon. I am no conjuror.

Careleſs. Gueſs.

Clyamon. It would be a needleſs trouble; pr'ythee ſpare it me.

Careleſs. Why, faith, in the gallery of the Houſe of Commons.

Clyamon. The Houſe of Commons! It muſt be a buſineſs of vaſt importance ſure, that could carry a fellow of thy gay, ſprightly temper, into that grave, venerable place.

Careleſs. No, thank Heaven! buſineſs and I are perfect ſtrangers to each other; but I had an hour or two upon my hands, and went thither merely to kill time: but was never more diverted in my whole life, than to ſee how ſome young members who had got their heads together, and were giggling over a copy of verſes inſcribed to Fanny Murray, were put to ſilence in an inſtant, and looked as ſilly as a ſchool-boy under the laſh of correction, on the ſpeaker's crying out, with an audible and auſtere voice—'To order, gentle-'men!—for ſhame!—to order.'

Clyamon. Methinks, indeed, they might have found a more proper place and time for laughter. Was my father in the houſe, pray?

Careleſs. O yes; and I aſſure you the old gentleman made as wiſe a figure as any there: he ſaid nothing indeed, but ſat as ſerious as a judge upon a criminal cauſe, leaning both his hands upon his gold-headed cane, and his chin upon his hands, and liſtening with great attention to a very long, and, I ſuppoſe, learned harangue, of a leading member.—How do you deſign to diſpoſe of yourſelf to-day?

Clyamon. I have not yet conſidered.

Careleſs. 'Tis a glorious morning!—Are you for the Park? I come on purpoſe to aſk you.

Clyamon. With all my heart.

Careleſs. Come along, then. I dare ſwear the Mall is half full by this time. Let us go, and laugh at the great vulgar and the ſmall, as Cowley ſays.

Juſt as they were going out of the room, a letter was preſented to Clyamon from his father; which he turning back to read, I ſtepped behind him, and found it contained theſe lines—

'DEAR CLY,

'I Have ſomething to impart to you, 'which is of the utmoſt conſequence 'to my peace of mind, and your future 'happineſs: be careful, therefore, not 'to be out of the way to-morrow morn-'ing, when I ſhall call upon you as I 'go to the Houſe; for what I have to 'propoſe cannot be ſettled too ſoon. Be 'aſſured I am impatient to ſee you make 'as good a figure in the world as I 'think you deſerve; and that no more 'is required of you, than a juſt ſenſe 'of your duty to me, and a regard for 'what is your own intereſt, to preſerve 'me always your very indulgent and 'loving father,

'AVARIO.'

Clyamon was ſo tranſported with the kindneſs of this epiſtle, that he could not forbear ſhewing it to Careleſs; who, knowing the temper of Avario, had no ſooner looked over, than he ſaid—

Careleſs. I will lay my life upon it, that the old gentleman has found out ſome rich widow or heireſs for you, with whoſe fortune you may make a figure in the world, and ſave his own till he can keep it no longer.

Clyamon. I hope not ſo, for as yet I have no inclination to marry; and, whenever I do, ſhall like to have a wife of my own chuſing.

Careleſs. You muſt be cautious, nevertheleſs, not to venture a ſecond *bruleè* with him; for he ſeems to have ſet his heart very much upon this buſineſs, whatever it is that he has now got into his head.

Clyamon. Deuce take you for putting it into mine! But I will think no more on it. If the thing ſhould be as you imagine, I ſhall have time enough to be uneaſy after knowing it. But come, 'tis almoſt two o'clock; let us away.

With theſe words they went to the Mall, and I returned home; where reflecting, as I always did after theſe excurſions, on what I had ſeen and heard, I could

I could not help being of the same opinion with Mr. Careless, as touching the intentions of Avario; and feared that poor Clyamon, with all his merit, would be obliged to become a prey to some old well-jointured Jezebel, or rich dowdy who owed her virginity to her ugliness. By what I have often freely confessed concerning the inquisitiveness of my disposition, the reader will easily suppose I felt no small impatience for the event of Avario's visit to his son; and indeed, I believe that young gentleman himself could scarce be more anxious. That I might lose nothing of what should pass between them, I took care to post myself very early in Clyamon's apartment; and it was well I did so, both for the satisfaction of my own curiosity, and the emolument of the publick, for Avario came in presently after me.

As they had not seen each other for some time, Clyamon threw himself on his knees, and in that posture thanked his father for the pardon he had vouchsafed to his offence, as well as for his kind promise he had given for the discharge of his debts. Avario seemed very much pleased with this submission, raised and embraced him with great affection; and, after they were seated, replied to what he had said in these terms—

Avario. It is a great deal of money, indeed, the folly you have been guilty of will cost me; but it is the first, and, I flatter myself, will be the last I shall have to complain of: so we will say no more of what is past. I came now to talk with you on a subject more agreeable to us both.

Clyamon. I have the greatest reason in the world, Sir, to hope every thing from your goodness.

Avario. Aye, Clyamon, you are my only son. You may be sure I have nothing so much at heart as your welfare, and I think I have now hit upon something that will make you as happy as you can wish to be. Your late uncle, Sir Arthur, was always teazing me on the score of a constant allowance for you out of my estate, to the end you may be in a manner independent, and I have at length resolved to do it.

Clyamon. Whatever you are pleased to grant, Sir, I shall take care to employ so as to give you no cause to repent your bounty.

Avario. But that is not all, Clyamon: what I shall do for you will put you in a way of making yourself a much greater man than you would be by what you will enjoy on my decease.

Clyamon. I am not ambitious, Sir; but shall readily embrace any laudable means of raising my fortune.

Avario. Why, that's well said; and what I have to propose is not only laudable, but honourable too. It is this; you shall be a member of the House of Commons.

Clyamon. Sir, I should be proud to serve my country in any capacity; but in this, fear my youth and inexperience will be very just objections.

Avario. Tut, tut! there are much younger than you in the House; and, though I say it, of much less understanding too. As to the forms that are to be observed there, I can instruct you in them; and as to the rest, you will easily come into it yourself; therefore no more of such idle scruples: an over modesty and diffidence of yourself is the worst quality a man that aims to rise in the world can be possessed of. I have considered on this matter in all it's circumstances, before I mentioned it to you; and, in order to qualify you for a member, have resolved to assign over to you five hundred pounds per annum of my estate.

Clyamon. That, Sir, is more than I could have presumed to ask.

Avario. I mean, the rents of so much shall be received in your name; as to the cash, I think it much safer in my own hands than yours; but you shall want nothing that is necessary: and when the business of parliament calls you to London, give you leave to draw upon me for what sum, or sums, you shall find occasion for, in reason.

Clyamon. This, Sir, is far from putting me out of a state of dependance.

Avario. You ought not to desire it. Your uncle talked foolishly, very foolishly, on this head; and if it had not been for the obligation I had to him on the score of your education, I should have told him so. A son ought always to be dependant on his father; and I think you have very great cause to be content in being so, as you have experienced the paternal affection I have for you, by my readiness to forgive your faults, and to discharge those debts your extravagancies had contracted.

Clyamon. Sir, I shall always retain a grateful

grateful ſenſe of all you have done for me. But pray, Sir, ſince it is your pleaſure that I ſhould be a candidate at the enſuing election, what place have you in your eye for me? I ſuppoſe for ſome borough.

Avario. No, no; for our own county.

Clyamon. Then, Sir, do you decline ſtanding yourſelf?

Avario. Yes, Clyamon. I grow old, and am weary of the fatigue of coming up to London once every year. I find it very expenſive, as well as troubleſome; for though I board while I am here at a pretty cheap rate, with one that was formerly my ſervant, yet I know not how it is, money runs ſtrangely away in this town. Beſides, I do not think I have been well uſed: I have had the honour of repreſenting the county of ***** in three ſucceſſive parliaments, and have got nothing by it, but the honour; and though I have conſtantly voted on the ſide of the court, and whenever any debate of conſequence was to come upon the carpet, have always previouſly attended the levee of the miniſter, to know his will and pleaſure; all the recompence I have had, has been ſometimes a ſhake of the hand, a gracious nod, a ſmile, and 'How does my 'good friend Avario?'

Clyamon. You amaze me, Sir! I never imagined a gentleman had any other intereſt in his election than the pleaſure of having an opportunity to ſerve his country.

Avario. Serve his country!—a fiddle on the country! It would be well worth a gentleman's while, indeed, to cajole, treat, and bribe, every little dirty fellow that has a vote to give; to ſpend ſo much time and money; and, it may be, drink himſelf half dead into the bargain, at his election; if it were not for the ſake of ſerving himſelf, inſtead of the rabble who make choice of him for their repreſentative. No, no, boy; if we had not honour, favour, and preferment, in view, our electors would be obliged to court us to accept their votes, not we to ſolicit them.

Clyamon. But, Sir, ſuppoſing this to be the caſe, how do you think it poſſible I ſhould acquire any of thoſe advantages which you ſay you have failed in the purſuit of yourſelf?

Avario. I'll tell you, Clyamon. I could only give my bare vote for or againſt any queſtion; I never had the gift of either ſpeaking or writing: now I am pretty ſure you can do both; and a pathetick ſpeech, or a ſtrong pamphlet, are prevailing arguments with the miniſtry; a man that can do theſe may have any thing, may make his own price. So, Cly, it will be your own fault, if in a ſeſſions or two you are not above receiving any aſſiſtance from me.

Clyamon. Sir, I ſhall be always ready to exert the little talents I am maſter of to promote whatever I think is for the good of the commonwealth.

Avario. Tut! what have you to do with the commonwealth? You are not to ſet up for a judge of what is for it's good, or what is not ſo; your buſineſs is to pleaſe the miniſter, and to think every thing right he takes upon him to maintain.

Clyamon. But, Sir, how is this conſiſtent with my conſcience or my honour?

Avario. Idle, very idle. I do not like theſe notions, Clyamon; they may tempt you to an oppoſition. I ſhall be afraid you are a Jacobite.

Clyamon. Why, Sir, are all men of honour Jacobites?

Avario. No; but this romantick, unprofitable honour you talk of, is either Jacobitiſm, or ſomething as bad—enthuſiaſm and bigotry. Is not the court the ſource of true honour? Do not all honours, dignities, and promotions, flow from thence? Therefore I ſay, whoever is againſt the court will never riſe to honour, or any thing elſe that is valuable.

Clyamon. Sir, you may be perfectly aſſured, that I ſhall always do my beſt in ſupport of every meaſure which tends to the real honour of his majeſty, and the good of my country; and never oppoſe any which do not oppoſe the conſtitution.

Avario. But you muſt not examine too ſcrupulouſly into theſe things. You are to ſuppoſe that thoſe who are entruſted with the management of publick affairs are better acquainted with the conſtitution than you can pretend to be; and muſt therefore take it for granted, that whatever they ſay or do is right.

Clyamon. But, Sir, does not this implicit faith in the judgment of others, and giving up my own entirely, favour ſomewhat of a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion?

Avario. No, it is only good policy, and looked upon as ſuch by all who know the world. Indeed, if after your voting, ſpeaking, and writing, they ſhould take no notice of you, it would behove you to pluck up a ſpirit, and extort that reſpect to your reſentment, which they were not grateful enough to pay to your complaiſance. I ſhall then give you leave to oppoſe them in every thing, whether it be wrong or whether it be right.

Clyamon. But would not this changing ſides, Sir, make me become contemptible to both parties?

Avario. Not at all; it is a thing too commonly practiſed to be wondered at, and has often had a very good effect, when nothing elſe would do. Publico, for example. It was a good while, indeed, before they bid up to his price; but they found it neceſſary at laſt, and he now enjoys the fruits of his labour.

Clyamon. Yes, Sir, I have heard of many others who have been bought off the ſame way; but whatever has been done in former adminiſtrations, I hope the preſent will attempt nothing that ought to be oppoſed.

Avario. No, no, you are not to ſuppoſe they will; unleſs, as I juſt now obſerved, they force you to it by neglecting to recompenſe your ſervices.

Clyamon. According to this, Sir, it will be very difficult, if not altogether impoſſible, for the people to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who would defend, and thoſe who would betray and ſacrifice, the liberties of their conſtituents.

Avario. If the people are betrayed and ſacrificed, as you call it, they can blame nobody but themſelves. Why do they take money for their votes? Why do they, like Eſau, ſell their birthrights for a meſs of pottage? When a gentleman buys a county, a borough, or a corporation, he has doubtleſs a right to make the moſt of it he can.

Clyamon. This, Sir, is puniſhing corruption with corruption.

Avario. Aye; is it not juſt it ſhould be ſo? Look ye, Clyamon, you are a novice in theſe affairs as yet, but a little time will make them familiar to you. I do not doubt but I ſhall hear of your being elected by the great man; and when once you are elected, your buſineſs is done; you will have no farther occaſion for my inſtructions or aſſiſtance either. But I ſhall ſay no more at preſent on this head: you muſt think of preparing yourſelf to ſet out on your journey to *****, in a day or two.

Clyamon. What, Sir, before you go?

Avario. Yes, yes. We ſhall not be diſſolved ſo ſoon as we expected. I do not believe I ſhall be able to get down theſe ſix weeks or two months. There have been ſome odd turns of late: but no matter; they are ſecrets, and muſt be kept ſo. But it is highly neceſſary you ſhould begin to make your intereſt: you are already known to the greateſt part of the gentry, and I am pretty ſure they will be all for you to a man. You muſt cultivate an acquaintance with the freeholders, ride about among them, invite ſome of the moſt leading men home, treat them handſomely, and make little preſents to their wives and daughters, of ſnuff-boxes, rings, necklaces, and ſuch toys, to pleaſe their fancies. I will get a friend of mine to purchaſe a cargo of them for you to take down, and will write to my ſteward to furniſh you with what money you ſhall have occaſion for.

Clyamon. Do they know, Sir, that you intend to decline ſtanding any more?

Avario. Not yet; but I ſhall write to night to inform them of it, and to urge all my friends in your behalf. I hear your couſin Hawkſmore has taken it into his head to offer himſelf as a candidate; and though he is not beloved, on account of the buſtle he made about turnpikes, yet the large eſtate he is now in poſſeſſion of by the death of Sir Arthur, may give him an influence over ſome people. So there is no time to be loſt: I would have you leave London on Monday next. I have given orders that all your creditors ſhall be paid their full demands this day, and I think you can have no other buſineſs of conſequence to detain you here.

Clyamon. None at all, Sir.

Avario. Well then, what friends you have to take leave of, you may ſee this afternoon; and come and dine with me to-morrow. It is Sunday, and you know is a leiſure day, and I ſhall be at home. Though I am a boarder, I believe you will be welcome; or it may be I ſhall add a diſh to the table; therefore do not fail to come.

Clyamon. You may depend, Sir, that

that this command is too agreeable to me not to be punctually obeyed.

The old gentleman then said no more; but, after giving his son a gracious nod, went out of the room, with a countenance which denoted the most perfect satisfaction of mind. Clyamon waited on him down stairs; and I intended to follow, as soon as his return should give me an opportunity of going down; but was retarded by Mr. Careless, who came in immediately after Avario was out of the house. This gentleman, who it seems has a sincere friendship for Clyamon, had been extremely impatient, and indeed more anxious than could have been expected from a person of his gay, thoughtless disposition, to know the event of the letter he had received from his father, had been come to the house some time, and waited in the parlour till the departure of Avario made it proper for him to appear. Almost the first salutation he gave to Clyamon contained an entreaty for the satisfaction of his curiosity in this point, which the other very readily complied with, in general terms; but had too much discretion to expose his father's mercenary views; or, by relating the design he had of making him a member of parliament, reveal the motives he had for doing so, or the instructions he had given him for his behaviour after he should be elected.

Mr. Careless, after having congratulated his friend on his being re-established in the good graces of his father, and the honour that was about to recede to him, said a great many pleasant and spirited things to him on the occasion of his being likely to become a member of that august and respectable assembly. But the particulars of this discourse, entertaining as it was, I am entirely unable to repeat, my Tablets being already crouded with the preceding dialogue; and all I can remember is, that the two gentlemen, after chatting away an hour, agreed to dine together that day, and to that end adjourned to a tavern in the neighbourhood, leaving me at liberty to retire to my own apartment. I was extremely pleased with finding, by what I had seen that day of Clyamon, that I had not been deceived in the high-raised expectations I had entertained of his good sense and probity; and also with perceiving that Avario, in spite of his sordid and avaricious disposition, could not help allowing the merits of a son, whose sentiments and principles were, in almost every thing, so directly opposite to his own.

The evening of the next day this worthy young gentleman called upon me, as he returned from having passed the former part of it with his father. He was much less reserved with me than he had been with Mr. Careless, which convinced me he knew how to refrain unbosoming himself to those whose solidity he had cause to doubt, and took a pleasure in being entirely open to those on whom he could depend that his confidence would not be abused either by wantonness or neglect. He repeated to me the rules prescribed to him by his father for the regulation of his conduct in parliament, and expressed the little obligation he thought himself under to him on that score, in terms the most strong and pathetick. These are some of his words—'The love of my country,' said he, 'I look upon as the first and 'greatest moral duty of mankind; and I 'think I may venture to assure myself, 'that I shall never be tempted to re-'nounce it on the prospect of any ad-'vantage offered, in what shape so-'ever.'

I then told him, that I believed the bulk of the people owed the grievances they complained of, greatly to the luxury of their representatives; who, having impaired their estates in the modish excesses of the times, found themselves under a necessity of entering into measures which otherwise they would never have complied with. 'Perhaps, too,' added I, 'to gratify the ambition of a 'beloved wife, or prevent the clamour 'of a turbulent one, may be one rea-'son to which the infringement of pub-'lick liberty may be ascribed.' Clyamon listened with great attention to what I said; and joining in my opinion, replied, that his own observation of some late instances confirmed the truth of this argument. 'The first of these 'excitements,' continued he, 'I have 'already experienced the danger of 'through my inadvertency, and shall 'be wary to avoid the snare in which I 'have been once entangled; and, as for 'the other, if ever I marry, shall en-'deavour to get a wife as near as pos-'sible to the description given by the 'poet of his mistress—

' ——————A maid
' Who knows not courts, yet courts does far
' outſhine
' In every ſtarry beauty of the mind;
' One who, array'd in native loveline ſs,
' And ſweet ſimplicity, deſpiſes art;
' And has a ſoul too great to ſtoop to
' pride,
' With the mean ways by which it aims at
' grandeur.'

With theſe diſcourſes we paſſed the time he ſtaid. I have not ſeen him ſince, but heard of his ſafe arrival at *****. Whether he will be elected for that county, cannot be determined at the time of my writing this; ſo can only ſay, that if he is, I doubt not but his character will appear to much more advantage, than in the faint ſketch I have here been able to give of it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME CONSISTS ONLY OF AN APOLOGY FOR MAKING NO INTRODUCTION AT ALL, AND HIS REASONS FOR THAT OMISSION.

SINCE my ſetting about this work, I have ſeen ſeveral late treatiſes that are half taken up with introductory prefaces to the publick. On a ſerious examination to what end thoſe long diſcourſes were penned, they ſeemed to me to have been occaſioned either by one or the other of the following motives: firſt, that an author having contracted with his bookſeller for a certain number of ſheets, without having well conſidered whether his head be ſtored with ſubject matter to make good his engagement, finds himſelf under a neceſſity of filling up the vacant pages by ſaying ſomething by way of an introduction, preface, or advertiſement to the reader; or, ſecondly, that fearing the eyes of the publick will not be ſufficiently open to the merit of his performance, or, perhaps, not have the curioſity even to look into it at all, he thinks proper to beſpeak their favour by a pompous prelude, and ſounds his own praiſes, like a trumpet at the door of a puppet-ſhew.

Now I am too great a lover of liberty ever to bind myſelf by any ſuch ſlaviſh agreement. The firſt of theſe incentives is quite out of the queſtion, and cannot poſſibly have any weight with me; and as to the ſecond, as a more perfect knowledge of myſelf than I perceive ſome others have will not permit me to be over vain in any thing I do, ſo the indolence of my nature will not permit me to be over anxious for the ſucceſs. Beſides, not having the temptation of the motives aforeſaid, I have more adventures to relate than can be eaſily crouded into this volume; therefore have neither time nor paper to ſpare for an addreſs, which would afford ſo little ſatisfaction to myſelf in the writing, and perhaps leſs to my reader in the peruſing.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINS SUCH MATTER AS, IT IS HIGHLY PROBABLE, WILL BE THE LEAST PLEASING TO THOSE FOR WHOSE SERVICE IT IS MOST INTENDED.

THERE is, according to the wiſe man's phraſe, a folly under the ſun, which, in my opinion, has as little

to

to be said for it as any of the many other of the present age; and that is, an insatiable inquisitiveness into future events; as if the foreknowledge of what is to come, would enable us either to alleviate or avert the decrees of Providence: yet are all ages, all degrees, of both sexes, tainted more or less with this epidemick frenzy. It cannot but afford the most astonishing, as well as melancholy reflections, in a thinking mind, to observe how many impostors, in and about this great town, are maintained by pretending to the art of divination, while the industrious followers of lawful occupations perish for want of due encouragement.

As I was one day on my Invisible Progressions, I accompanied a mingled crowd of people into a house situated in one of the most obscure parts of the city. At first I imagined that this was some private chapel, where persons resorted to pay their adorations to the Deity in a manner not authorized by the government; but was soon convinced of my mistake, when, instead of a pulpit and desk, I found the room we came into furnished only with globes and telescopes, and other implements of a soothsayer and astrologer. I had not patience to hear what idle predictions this oracle would spout forth, especially as I had no acquaintance with any of those who I saw came to consult him; so took my leave of the deceiver and the deceived, full of indignation against the one, and a pity, mingled with contempt, for the other: for what can be said in defence of the understanding of those people who waste their time and money in consulting those abject dealers in futurity! creatures who would make you believe they can read the most hidden decrees of fate in the grounds of coffee, tea, and chocolate! I had often heard much talk of these conjurors, but not till I was convinced by the testimony of my own senses, could ever be brought to believe, that persons endowed with a liberal education could defend so far as to listen to their inconsistent prate, much less give credit to what they uttered; but so strong is the desire of looking into the seeds of time, especially among the fair sex, that sometimes the most proud, as well as the most nice and delicate, will throw aside all consideration of what they are, or would be thought, and, for the sake of being told their fortune, send for, caress, and associate themselves with, the very lowest and most dirty wretches in human nature.

Lysetta is descended from a very ancient and honourable house. She lived till considerably turned on the wrong side of thirty without discovering the least inclination for marriage, much less gave any room for the most censorious ever to suspect she encouraged any private gallantries; and the whole tenor of her conduct was such, as no one could imagine her capable of harbouring any notions beneath the dignity of her birth and character. A long acquaintance gave me the privilege of visiting her pretty frequently, and never was denied access. I was one day at her house when she had no other company than a young lady with whom she was extremely intimate. While we were drinking tea, her woman came running into the room, and with a significant tone of voice, said—'Madam, the wo-'man you know of is below.'—'Tis 'very well,' replied Lysetta; 'shew her 'into my chamber, and bid her stay a 'little.' Then turning to her friend, they smiled on each other, nodded, winked, and seemed big with some secret between themselves.

I found, by all this, that my presence might very well be spared at this time; so turned down my cup, and took my leave. As I was going down stairs, I heard Lysetta order herself to be denied to whoever should come that evening; which convincing me of what I before had reason to imagine, that there was something more than ordinary in hand, I resolved, if possible, to fathom the mystery. Accordingly I went home, popped on my Invisible Belt, put my Tablets in my pocket, and returned with all speed. A lazy footman, lolling against a post, with the door wide open behind him, gave me an easy entrance into the house. I very well knew the situation of Lysetta's chamber, and went directly thither; but, to my great mortification, found the ladies had bolted themselves in; and all I could distinguish of what was doing, for some time, was only the hoarse bass of a loud laugh from Lysetta, and the squeaking treble of a shrill tee-hee from the other.

I stood centinel, however, at the top of the stair-case, and at last was happily relieved. Lysetta opened the door, and called

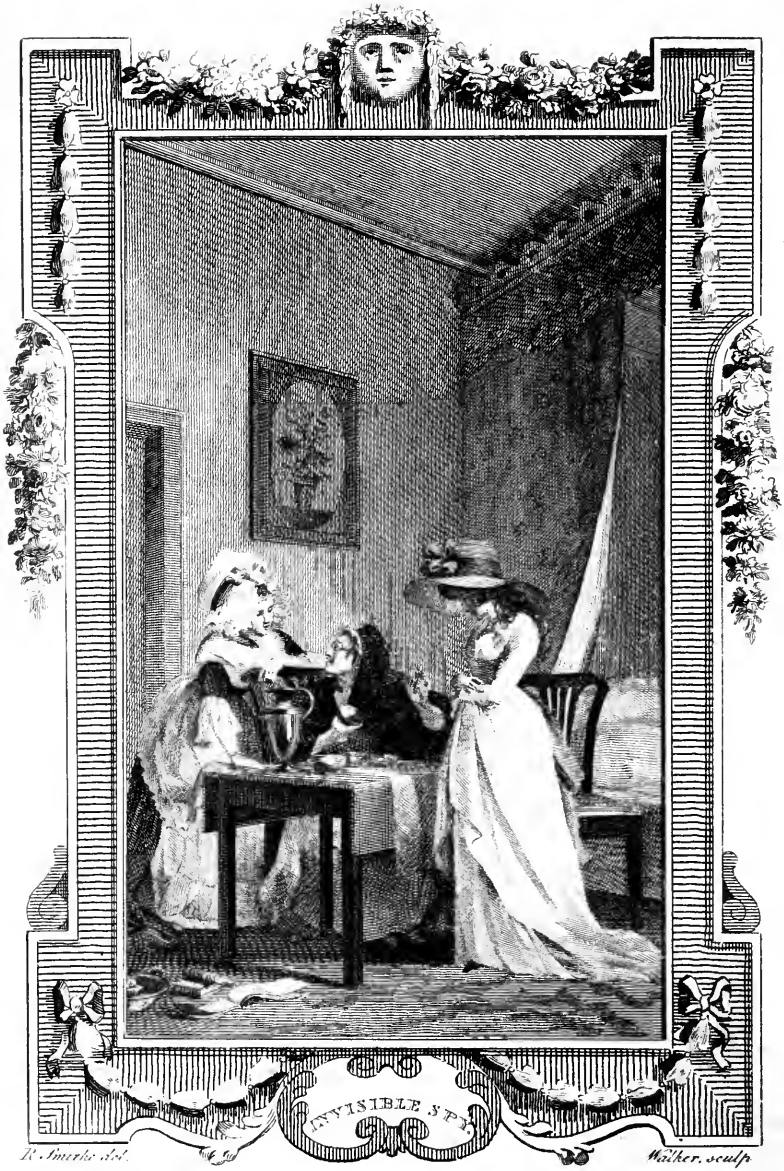

Plate III.

Publish'd as the Act directs by Harrison & Co. Sept. 1. 1788.

called to her woman to bring clean cups. Having now gained admittance, I ſoon perceived what they were about. A coffee-pot upon the table; the dregs of the liquor it had contained poured into a baſon; ſeveral cups, with more figures on the inſide than the outſide, and the yet recent circles they had left on being whelmed down on a damaſk napkin ſpread on one corner of the table; preſently informed me they were employed in the art and myſtery of conjuration. The prieſteſs of theſe farcical rites was a mean-habited, ill-looked woman; and, though not old, had her noſe ſaddled with a pair of ſpectacles almoſt as big as the tops of the cups ſhe pretended to inſpect: ſhe was placed between the two ladies, who ſeemed to treat her with the greateſt marks of freedom and civility.

Lyſetta, I found, had been ſo complaiſant to her friend as to let her be firſt ſerved: but it was now her own turn; and freſh cups being brought, and the coffee-oracle having judiciouſly poured the quantity of a tea-ſpoonful into each, the lady took it into her hand, threw out the liquor, whelmed it on the cloth, and turned it round three times. All being concluded, the propheteſs took up the firſt with the moſt ſolemn air, looked ſtedfaſtly into it, then on Lyſetta; and, after having repeated this ſeveral times, at laſt delivered her predictions in theſe terms—

Fortune-teller. I ſee a ring, Madam; your ladyſhip will be married.

Lyſetta. 'Tis rather a mourning-ring; ſome of my kindred or friends, perhaps, may die.

Fortune-teller. I can ſay nothing to that, Madam, as yet: but I am poſitive here is a wedding-ring, a heart juſt by it; and a little farther there is a great houſe, with a high wall, and a pair of gates. Your ladyſhip will have ſome gentleman that has a fine ſeat in the country—it looks almoſt like a caſtle.

Lyſetta. I know nothing of it. But what elſe do you ſee?

Fortune teller. Here is a man, Madam, that ſeems to bring you money. Here are papers, too; I do not know but they may be bills.

Lyſetta. Very likely; for I expect my banker here either to-day or to-morrow.

Fortune-teller. Then here is a bundle of ſomething brought to your ladyſhip's houſe.

Lyſetta. Oh, that is a new ſack I have making. But is there nothing more?

Fortune-teller. Not in this cup, Madam: but I will look into the next.

Lyſetta. Do; for you have told me nothing of any conſequence.

Fortune-teller. There is a great deal here, Madam, I can perceive already. Here is a gentleman ſitting in an eaſy chair, leaning his elbow upon the table, and ſeems to be in a deep ſtudy.

Lyſetta. Piſh! what's this to me?

Fortune-teller. Yes, Madam, it is a great deal to you; for here is your ladyſhip, and the very ſame gentleman on his knees before you. You turn your head away, and look a little ſcornful; but he has you by the hand. Bleſs me! here you are both together again; he is talking very earneſtly to you. I never ſaw any thing ſo plain; your ladyſhip may ſee it yourſelf.

In ſpeaking theſe laſt words, ſhe held the cup to Lyſetta, and with a pin pointed out the eyes, the noſe, and mouth, of the pretended figure; but Lyſetta puſhed it from her, and ſaid—

Lyſetta. I could never ſee any thing in a cup in my life. But what ſort of a man is he?

Fortune-teller. Pretty tall, Madam; well ſhaped; very genteel; has a fair complexion, and ſomewhat of a languiſhment in his eyes.

Lyſetta. I cannot recollect that I know any man who anſwers this deſcription.

Fortune-teller. I ſcarce think you do, Madam, at preſent; but your ladyſhip may take my word for it, that you will ſee and be courted by ſuch a one; for here is a figure of three over his head: it muſt be either in three days, or three weeks, at fartheſt. Let me conſider—aye, the moon was at the full yeſterday—this event muſt happen before ſhe enters into her next quarter. But the next cup, it may be, will ſhew it more clearly.

With this ſhe took up the third cup; and had no ſooner looked into it, than ſhe ſet it down again, clapped her hands together, and cried out—

Fortune teller. Bleſs me! now I am poſitive your ladyſhip will very ſoon be married! Here is an altar, a book upon it,

it, and a parſon; all as exact as if they were drawn by a pencil.

She then took up the cup again; and perceiving Lyſetta began to look a little more ſerious than ſhe had done, went on in this manner—

Fortune-teller. Well, this is wonderful, indeed! Of all the cups I ever turned in my life, I never ſaw any thing like this! Here is your ladyſhip hand in hand with that ſaid gentleman who I told you was in the other. I would now ſwear that your ladyſhip will be a wife before any one imagines you have any thoughts that way.

Lyſetta. I have a very good opinion of your ſkill, yet am certain you are miſtaken in this prediction; for, to tell you the truth, I am reſolved never to marry.

Fortune-teller. Your ladyſhip may reſolve what you pleaſe; but if the ſtars reſolve the contrary, all your reſolutions will come to nothing. Madam, there is no reſiſting fate: his gentleman is ordained to be your huſband; and, how much ſoever you may ſet yourſelf againſt it, the decrees of deſtiny are inevitable, and you muſt ſubmit.

Lyſetta. Oh, Heavens! whether I will or not!

Fortune-teller. Undoubtedly, Madam. There is no withſtanding the ſuperior powers; and the leaſt things which we think the farthеſt removed from us, are frequently the moſt near at hand; ſo that deſign what you will, reſolve what you will, it is all in vain; your ladyſhip is ordained to be a wife, and the gentleman I ſee in theſe cups muſt be your huſband.

Lyſetta. Well, if ſuch a thing ſhould come to paſs, ſhall I be happy?

Fortune-teller. There is nothing in the cup, Madam, that ſhews the contrary.

The cups having been all examined, the prophetеſs, after receiving a handſome gratuity for her trouble, took her leave, and left Lyſetta and her fair companion to reaſon between themſelves on the wonders of her art. But my Chryſtalline Remembrancer being now quite full, it is not in my power to relate the particulars of their diſcourſe; and can only ſay, that they both ſeemed to give an implicit credit to every thing ſhe had pretended to reveal.

CHAP. III.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH A VERY FOOLISH ADVENTURE OF LYSETTA'S, TO WHICH ALL THAT WAS CONTAINED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER WAS ONLY A PRELUDE.

HAVING diſcovered this folly in Lyſetta, which before I could never have imagined, I began now to be cenſorious enough to ſuſpect ſhe might alſo be guilty of others, and therefore took it into my head to make her ſome Inviſible Viſits, at thoſe hours in which it was likely her behaviour was moſt unguarded. In order to ſatisfy my curioſity, I went one morning, and found her buſy in looking over ſome new pamphlets juſt ſent her by her bookſeller. As I always thought the moſt certain way to form a true judgment of a woman's mind was in knowing what ſort of reading ſhe moſt delighted in, I was glad to perceive that this lady made choice of only ſuch books as ſhewed her neither a wanton nor a coquette, and returned all thoſe which, by their titles, diſcovered the leaſt tendency to prophaneneſs or obſcenity. After this, ſhe began to open the leaves of one of them; but before ſhe had gone through half the leaves it contained, was interrupted by her footman, who brought her a letter, and ſaid the perſon waited for an anſwer. I ſlipped behind her chair while ſhe broke the ſeal, and the contents were as follow—

'TO THE HONOURABLE LYSETTA.

'MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LADYSHIP,

'MADAM,

'I Hope your goodneſs will pardon the liberty a ſtranger takes in 'writing to you; but as I am not ſo 'fortunate to be acquainted with any 'perſon who can introduce me to your 'ladyſhip, I am obliged to become my 'own ſolicitor, and moſt humbly re'queſt you will allow me the privilege 'of waiting on you this afternoon, if no 'previous engagement intervenes be'tween me and my deſires, having 'ſomething to communicate of the ut-

'moſt

'most moment to the peace of him who 'has the honour to be, with the most 'profound respect, your ladyship's sin-'cerely devoted servant,

'ORSAMES.'

Lysetta seemed a good deal confounded on reading this little epistle; and after pausing a while, argued with herself in this manner—'Good God! if 'this should be the man the fortune-'teller told me of! she said I should 'hear or see something of him within 'three days, and this is but the second 'since the prediction. If I was sure he 'was the person she mentioned, I think 'I ought not to give him leave to visit 'me, at least not on his first requesting 'it; yet I should be glad, methinks, to 'see if he any way answers the descrip-'tion she gave of him: besides, if I 'should refuse him, some accident or 'another would bring us together; for 'it is certain, there is no such thing as 'disappointing fate. Why, therefore, 'should I keep myself in suspence? No, 'I will see him, and hear what he has 'to say. It may be he may come upon 'some other business than what I ima-'gine, and then it would be vastly silly 'in me to avoid him. Whoever he is, 'or whatever his designs are, it can be 'of no prejudice to see him once. He 'cannot run away with me, cannot have 'me against my will.'

She then called her servant, and bid him say that she should be at home. The fellow ran down, but had scarce time to deliver the message he was charged with, before she repented of it, as may be seen by this exclamation: 'Lord! 'what have I done! if he is really the 'person I take him to be, he must think 'me strangely forward in so easily grant-'ing him admittance.'

While she was speaking this, she ran to the stair-case with an intent to retract what she had said; but a second thought witholding her, she turned back into the room, and cried out—'What a fool 'I am! he does not know that I have 'consulted a fortune-teller, nor that I 'have any reason to guess at the busi-'ness that brings him hither. Why, 'therefore, should I shun him? What 'shame can my seeing him reflect upon 'me? It will be time enough to forbid 'his visits when he has declared him-'self my lover.'

How long she would have continued in that mind is uncertain. Two ladies came in that instant to desire her company with them to the Park, being a fine morning; to which she consenting, I left them, and went home, but with a full resolution to return in the afternoon, and see what event the expected interview would produce. Accordingly I put on my Belt of Invisibility, and went to the house of Lysetta. I saw a chair waiting, but the door was shut, and I was obliged to stay in the street a considerable time, before it was opened for any person, either to go in or out. I got entrance at last, and passed directly to the dining-room, where I found the person I was desirous of beholding. On my looking earnestly on him, I saw he had so much the resemblance of the picture drawn for him by the fortune-teller, that I presently perceived she must be better acquainted with his features than the cups could make her, and that in reality she was a marriage-broker, under the disguise of a coffee-grounds calculator. He had placed himself very close to Lysetta on a settee, and must have been making a declaration of love to her by the answer she gave just as I came into the room.

Lysetta. Sir, it does not become me to hearken to any professions of this nature, from a person, to whose family, fortune, and character, I am so entire a stranger.

Orsames. It will be easy for me, Madam, to give you full satisfaction in all these particulars; but till I can do so, I beg you will permit me, at least, to convince you of my passion.

Lysetta. Though, Sir, there is no room to doubt, either by your appearance or behaviour, that you are a gentleman and a man of honour, yet I should be glad, methinks, to know some one person with whom you are acquainted.

Orsames. Unfortunately for me, Madam, there is not a soul in this town who can give any account of me. This, perhaps, you will think odd; but permit me to give a short sketch of my history, and you will cease to wonder at it.

Lysetta. Then, pray Sir, oblige me so far.

Orsames. It is no boast in me, Madam, to assure your ladyship, that my family is among the number of the most ancient in England, having been settled here long before the Conquest, and many

of them been biſhops, judges, and privy-counſellors; but my father, taking ſome diſguſt at the meaſures in a late reign, reſolved to quit his native country for ever; and to that end ſold the ſeat of his anceſtors, with a very conſiderable eſtate in Somerſetſhire, and carried the purchaſe-money, together with his whole family, to Philadelphia, where he had then a brother, reputed the moſt wealthy merchant in that place. It was there, Madam, I was born, and am the only ſurviving iſſue of my parents, and conſequently the ſole heir of their poſſeſſions, as alſo of my uncle's, he dying without leaving any child behind him. I fear I tire you, Madam.

Lyſetta. No, Sir, I beg you will go on.

Orſames. From my very infancy there was ſomewhat in my nature which could not reliſh the manners of theſe Americans, though born among them. I had read a great deal, and heard much concerning England, and had always a paſſionate deſire to come to it; but my father, even after my arriving at maturity, would never liſten to any intreaties on that ſcore. After his death, my uncle was no leſs averſe to my removal; but on his demiſe, finding myſelf freed from all dependency, and entirely maſter of my own actions, I left all my effects to be diſpoſed of by a perſon whoſe integrity I am well aſſured of, and taking with me only a thouſand guineas, juſt for preſent uſe, embarked in the firſt ſhip that ſailed for England, where I happily arrived about ſix weeks ſince.

Lyſetta. But would it not have been better, Sir, that you had ſtaid at Philadelphia till your affairs had been ſettled?

Orſames. Not at all, Madam; I have friends there that will manage for me as well as if I were there in perſon. Beſides, an irreſiſtible impulſe hurried me to England. I could not then account for my impatience, but am now convinced it was my guardian angel called me to behold in reality that lovely face I have ſo often ſeen in dreams.

Lyſetta. What! dream of me!

Orſames. Yes, Madam, though ſo many leagues diſtant, my ſpirit has been often with you, converſed with you, and avowed that flame my mortal part now feels.

Lyſetta. Is it poſſible!

Orſames. True, by Heaven!

Lyſetta. And are you certain I am the ſame you ſaw in your ſleep?

Orſames. I could not be deceived; the firſt moment my eyes were bleſt with your preſence at the Chapel Royal, I forgot the ſolemnity of the place, and the pious buſineſs that had brought me thither.

Lyſetta. 'Tis very wonderful; but 'tis time enough to talk of theſe things. As you have related to me the former part of your life, I ſhould like to know in what manner you intend to regulate the future.

Orſames. That muſt be ſubmitted to my charming directreſs; all my affairs, as well as my heart, muſt henceforth be at your diſpoſal. I had thoughts, indeed, of purchaſing a ſmall eſtate, of about fifteen hundred or two thouſand pounds a year; but whether I ſhould put the remainder of my fortune into the publick funds, or lay it out on an employment at court, I had not yet determined.

Lyſetta. Oh, by all means buy a place; the court is the only thing upon earth.

Orſames. Next to your company I believe it is; and ſince you approve the thought, ſhall infallibly purſue it.

Lyſetta. Whoever you marry, Sir, will doubtleſs be of my opinion.

Orſames. Ah! do not wrong my faithful heart ſo much as to imagine it capable of being charmed by any other. No, if all my love, my ſervices, my prayers, ſhould fail to move the adorable Lyſetta, I vow an eternal celibacy.

Lyſetta. You men always talk thus when you would impoſe on the credulity of our ſex; but, Sir, it is time alone that is the true touch-ſtone of ſincerity.

Orſames. Madam, it is, and to that I ſhall truſt the deciſion of my fate; therefore, I once more implore your permiſſion to repeat my vows, and pay you the tribute which beauty like yours demands from love like mine.

Lyſetta. I will not hear ſo much of love; but, as you are a ſtranger in town, and as yet have no acquaintance, I cannot be ſo ungenteel to refuſe you the privilege of viſiting me ſometimes.

At theſe words, he threw himſelf upon his knees; and, catching hold of both her hands, preſſed firſt the one and then the other to his lips, with the greateſt appearance of tranſport; all which ſhe ſuffered,

suffered, nor discovered the least reluctance. I know not how long he might have continued in this mute courtship, if the sound of somebody at the door had not obliged him suddenly to rise. It was Lysetta's servant, who immediately entered, and presented her with two letters, which had been just left her by the post. She looked on the superscriptions, then threw them carelessly on the table, without shewing any impatience to examine the contents; but her lover, either through politeness, or because he had acted enough of his part for the first time, thought proper to take his leave, saying, he would do himself the honour to wait on her the next day.

He was no sooner gone than she began to give a loose to those agitations his presence and discourse had occasioned, and which she had not without great difficulty restrained from being visible. It was in these terms she expressed herself, which, incoherent as they are, I shall deliver them to my readers, just as I found them the next morning engraved on my Tablets. 'Well, this is the 'oddest accident; sure there was never 'any thing so astonishing! Let people 'say what they will, there is a great 'deal in the throwing of a cup; that 'woman is certainly the devil; how 'exactly she described this gentleman! 'I have said I would never marry, but 'if the stars have ordained it otherwise, 'it is in vain to resist; and if his fortune be such as he pretends it is, I can 'see no cause for any one to blame me.'

Here she stopped, and fell into a little reverie; but soon coming out of it, thus renewed her ejaculations: 'There is nothing in the person nor address of this 'new lover but what is perfectly agreeable; and I believe I shall like him 'well enough on a little more acquaintance with him: he seems vastly charmed with me; but one ought not to 'build on what the men say on these 'occasions. There is something strangely particular, indeed, in his dreaming 'of me without ever having seen me: 'in fine, the more I consider, the more 'I find the hand of fate is in this business, and I must submit.'

After this, she seemed somewhat more composed, and began to read the letters she had received. I also looked over them at the same time; but found they were only from relations, of family affairs of no moment to the publick, or to the narrative I am reciting. When I came home, had thrown myself into an easy-chair, and began to ruminate on the extraordinary scene I had been witness of, I knew not whether the base design, which I now plainly perceived had been concerted between the fortune-teller and Orames, or the weakness and infatuation of Lysetta in giving credit to their romantick lyes, had the most right to engross my amazement. But when I reflected more deeply on the various impositions I daily saw practised, my wonder ceased, on account either of the fortune-teller or the fortune-hunter, and fixed itself entirely on the simplicity of Lysetta. It now seemed no strange to me, that the most illiterate and abject wretches should be endowed with a natural store of cunning, which, backed by impudence, renders them capable of forming contrivances to deceive; else how do we often see pick pockets and house breakers circumvent the watchfulness of the most cautious? But then, those sort of pilferers rob us when our heads are turned another way, or when we are sleeping in our beds; but in listening to fortune-tellers, we are defrauded with our eyes open, and give, as it were, our own consent to the worst kind of theft, that of stealing away our understanding.

People guilty of this egregious folly, when detected in it, pretend they consult those ridiculous oracles for no other end than merely to divert themselves, without believing, or even remembering one syllable of the predictions delivered to them. This may, perhaps, at first be true; but there are too many instances which prove, that custom, by degrees, turns into earnest what might once be meant as a jest. The reason is this: those subtle creatures frequently find means, either by emissari s, or by insinuating themselves among servants, to get into the secrets of families, and one real fact serving to make all they say believed, gives them the power to work the person who depends upon them almost to any point they aim at. The most pernicious designs have been carried on this way. Husbands have been set against their wives, and wives against their husbands; parents have been made to disregard their children, and children to forget all obedience to their parents; the best matches have been broke off, and the most disho, or-

tionable ones made: in fine, there is no kind of miſchief but what has happened when a fortune-teller has been bribed by ſome baſe perſon, who has an intereſt in bringing about ſuch events. Therefore, as there is a ſtrict law in force againſt theſe pretended dealers in futurity, I cannot help ſaying, that I regret it's not being executed with greater punctuality; ſince the more ſimple an evil appears, the more dangerous it proves in it's effects.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINS THE CATASTROPHE OF AN AFFAIR, WHICH THE REPETITION OF OUGHT NOT TO GIVE OFFENCE TO ANY ONE, EXCEPT THE PERSON WHOSE RESENTMENT THE AUTHOR WILL NOT LOOK UPON AS A MISFORTUNE.

LYSETTA was ſo ſtrongly perſuaded in her mind, that it was her fate to marry Orſames, that ſhe made not the leaſt attempt to check the growing inclination ſhe had for him, but rather thought it a virtue in her to encourage the moſt tender ſentiments for a perſon ordained by Heaven to be her huſband. I made ſeveral viſits to her, both in my viſible and inviſible capacity, and ſeldom went without finding Orſames there, and every time more free and *degagè* than before. He made ſo ſwift a progreſs in his courtſhip, that in leſs than a month he became the maior domo of her family, commanded all the ſervants, and behaved as if already their maſter. To add to all this, Lyſetta ſuffered him to conduct her to all publick places, ſat in the ſame box at the playhouſe, and always dined and ſupped with her, whatever company were there: in a word, they were never aſunder but in thoſe hours when decency obliged them to be ſo.

So ſtrange a revolution in the behaviour of Lyſetta, made a great noiſe in the town; all her acquaintance were ſurprized; all her friends and kindred were much alarmed at it; eſpecially as the perſon to whom ſhe ſhewed theſe extraordinary favours was altogether unknown, nor could they get the leaſt account of him. Thoſe, who either through a long converſation or affinity of blood, could take the privilege of diſcourſing with her on this head, did it in a very free manner; but the anſwers ſhe gave to their interrogatories were far from being ſatisfactory. When ſhe told them his hiſtory as he had related it, they treated it with contempt. Some ſaid that he was an impoſtor; others, more modeſt, that they wiſhed he was not ſo; to both which ſhe returned, that whatever he were, ſhe was certain it was her fate to marry him, and deſired they would give themſelves no pain on that occaſion. As ſhe was naturally of a haughty, obſtinate diſpoſition, it is highly probable, that the remonſtrances they took the liberty of making to her, rather ſtrengthened than abated her reſolution of giving herſelf to him. I was at her houſe one day, under cover of my Inviſible Belt, when I heard the following converſation between them—

Orſames. Condemn me not, my angel, for being ſometimes melancholy even in your preſence. Though you have promiſed to make me one day the happieſt of mankind, and I look upon every word of that dear mouth as unfailing as an oracle, yet when I conſider the length of time between me and the conſummation of my wiſhes, the impatience of my paſſion will not permit me to be gay.

Lyſetta. You men are always in ſuch a hurry in every thing you do.

Orſames. Ah, Madam, 'tis a dreadful thing to have one's happineſs depend on the uncertain winds and waves; it may be yet two months before my effects can arrive from Philadelphia.

Lyſetta. And do you call that ſo long a time?

Orſames. A million of ages in the account of love, and even, according to common calculation, longer than human nature can ſuſtain continual torments; eight whole weeks, ſix and fifty anxious days, and as many reſtleſs nights; upwards of thirteen hundred hours of tedious expectation; and minutes almoſt numberleſs, waſted in pain which might be paſſed in pleaſure, if you would ſhorten the tremendous date.

Lyſetta. What would you have me do?

Orſames. Ah! if you loved, you need not be told, but of yourſelf generouſly bring the bleſſed event nearer to my wiſhes.

Lyſetta. You would not have me marry

marry till your affairs are ſettled, and things can be done to our mutual ſatisfaction.

Orſames. I underſtand you, Madam; the articles of jointure and pin money, I know, are cuſtomary in modiſh marriages; but the paſſion you have inſpired me with is of too ſublime a nature to ſtoop to ſuch mean forms. I aſk not what your fortune is, but will ſettle the whole of mine upon you; your lovely perſon is all the treaſure I am ambitious of preſerving; the reſt ſhall be at your diſpoſal.

Lyſetta. That is kind, indeed; but more than I deſire or would accept of.

Orſames. Oh! that you had no other fortune than your beauty! then would the ſincerity of my love be proved by endowing you with all that Heaven has made me maſter of. Alas! you know not how ardently, how faithfully I adore you.

Lyſetta. Yes, I am vain enough to think I have ſome ſhare in your affections.

Orſames. Some ſhare! Oh! could you be ſenſible of the thouſandth part of what I feel, pity, if not love, would compel you to eaſe my throbbing heart of the ſuſpence it labours under, and you would give yourſelf to my burning, bleeding paſſion.

Lyſetta. I have already ſaid I will be yours, and now again repeat it.

Orſames. But when, my angel!

In ſpeaking theſe words he threw himſelf upon his knees before her, burſt into a flood of well-diſſembled tears, and graſped her *robe de chambre* with agonies which I cannot but ſay had much the appearance of reality, while in theſe terms he proſecuted his deſign—

Orſames. I have till now ſupported life but in the rapturous hope of being one day bleſſed in your poſſeſſion: but even hope, by it's uncertainty, becomes at laſt too weak an aid; and ſoon, very ſoon, my adorable Lyſetta, will you behold your faithful lover a cold breathleſs corpſe, unleſs the balm of your kindneſs recruits the vital lamp, and gives freſh vigour to my depreſſed and breaking heart.

Lyſetta. I cannot bear to hear and ſee you thus. Riſe, Sir; this poſture does not become the man whom I intend to make my huſband.

Orſames. No, by Heaven, I never will quit your feet without an aſſurance of my happineſs. Say, then, oh ſay! when ſhall be the bliſsful day that makes you mine!

Lyſetta. Since it muſt be ſo, even when you pleaſe.—No, hold, I had forgot myſelf.

Orſames. Oh, Heavens, what now?

Lyſetta. I promiſed a clergyman, my near kinſman, that if ever I married, he ſhould perform the ceremony; he is at preſent out of town, but will return next Sunday, and on the Tueſday following it ſhall not be my fault if we do not attend him at the altar.

Orſames. Extatick ſound! May I depend on the performance of this heavenly promiſe!

Lyſetta. You may, and be entirely eaſy on that point; and take now my hand, as an earneſt of my giving it you in a more ſolemn manner before a parſon; henceforward I ſhall look upon myſelf as yours.

Orſames. Angel! goddeſs! Thus then let me ſeal the covenant on thoſe charming lips that have pronounced it.

Lyſetta. The covenant will not hold good in law without both parties interchangeably ſign their aſſent.

She uttered theſe words with a moſt pleaſing ſmile, and at the ſame time threw her arms about his neck, and returned the paſſionate ſalute ſhe had received from him, adding this tender expreſſion—'My dear, dear Orſames, I 'do not now bluſh to confeſs to you, 'that from the firſt moment you de'clared yourſelf my lover, my heart 'correſponded with your vows, and 'told me what would be the event.' He affected too much tranſport, on hearing her ſpeak in this manner, to be able to make any other reply than kiſſes and embraces, which, as ſhe was far from repelling, or ſeeming the leaſt offended at, I know not what advantages he might have taken, on finding her thus ſoftened by his artifices, if a ſudden interruption had not, happily for her, broke off this dangerous entertainment. A footman came and told her that her aunt, lady Gravelove, was come to viſit her; on which ſhe cried out with ſome peeviſhneſs—'Piſh! why did you not ſay I was from home?' Then turning fondly to Orſames, ſaid—

Lyſetta. Do you chuſe to join company with my aunt? or ſhall I fetch ſome book to amuſe you with till ſhe is gone?

Orſames.

Orſames. No, my deareſt love; this lady has always looked upon me with an unpleaſing eye, eſpecially of late, therefore will not offend her with my preſence; neither are my ſpirits enough compoſed, in the exceſs of joy you have inſpired me with, to read any thing with attention; ſo will take a little walk.

Lyſetta. Do ſo; but I ſhall expect you back to ſupper: my aunt ſeldom ſtays longer than to drink tea, and I am ſure I ſhall not preſs her at this time.

No more was ſaid on either ſide; they embraced and parted; ſhe went into the next room, and he down ſtairs, in order to go where his buſineſs or inclination called him. As I never believed this fellow was what he pretended, I had taken ſome pains to diſcover the truth of his circumſtances, but without any ſucceſs, till it now came into my mind to follow him after he had left Lyſetta's houſe; which I did, reſolving not to loſe ſight of him till he ſhould return to her again.

He went directly to Drury Lane, walked very faſt, and never ſtopped till he came to the entrance of a narrow paſſage between that place and Wild Street, where he ſtood ſtill, and looked round him, I ſuppoſe, to ſee if any one was near who might know him; for day was not yet quite ſhut in: then paſſed a little farther, looked about him again, and finding the coaſt, as he thought, clear, none being in the alley but his Inviſible Attendant, ſlipped haſtily into a little dirty alehouſe, where an old woman met him, and told him his friends were all above; on which he ran up ſtairs, and puſhed open the door of a room, pretty ſpacious indeed, but had otherwiſe all the ſigns of beggary and wretchedneſs about it. Here we found five or ſix men tolerably well habited, but had ſomething in their countenances which made me gueſs their occupation before they diſcovered it by their converſation; for they were no better than a gang of thieves and ſharpers: they were ſitting round a table with a great bowl of punch before them, when Orſames ruſhed in, and, with a gay air, accoſted them in theſe terms—

Orſames. Wiſh me joy, my lads; my hearts of ſteel, wiſh me joy; I have gained my point; all is over, 'faith.

Firſt Man. What, married!

Orſames. No, but as good as married; the wench and her twelve thouſand pounds are as ſure to me, as if I had the one in my arms, and the other in my pocket. Tueſday is the day, my buffs! But I muſt have more money, by G—d! I have not a ſingle doit left.

Second Man. How! all the fifty pieces gone already!

Orſames. Ay, faith, and well laid out too; I ſhall return it with intereſt; you are all to ſhare in the money, and the woman too. But come, how ſtands ſtock among you?

Third Man. Curſed low: though we have been all out to-day, we have not collected above thirty pieces, and four gold watches that muſt be knocked to pieces, and the caſes melted down, or the makers names may betray us.

Fourth Man. The road grows worſe and worſe every day, I think.

Orſames. But did you get nothing from the ladies the fortune-teller told you were to take the air this morning on Barnes Common?

Fifth Man. I ſhould have done; but, as the devil would have it, juſt as they were going to pull out their purſes, three gentlemen, with fire-arms, came galloping towards us, and obliged me to make off without my booty.

Orſames. 'Twas damn'd unlucky!

Firſt Man. One meets with a thouſand diſappointments; for my part, I am half ſick of the buſineſs, and ſo I believe we are all.

Second Man. Ay, faith; for, what with feeing inn-keepers, coachmen, fortune-tellers, and other ſuch neceſſary informers, we have the leaſt part of the profit to ourſelves.

Third Man. Ay, I wiſh, Orſames, you were once married, that you might ſet up a gaming-table under the ſanction of your lady's name. Gaming is ten times a more profitable, as well as a ſafer way of thieving.

Orſames. You know it was my bargain, and you may depend upon my honour, that it ſhall be the firſt thing I will do.

Fourth Man. It will be a joyful day; for, ſince taxes have been ſo high, and trade ſo low, ſuch numbers of ſhopkeepers are obliged to take the road, that we old practitioners can ſcarce get a living by it.

Orſames. Well, well, all this will be over

over in a short time: but you must raise me some cash; I can easily give you an account of the fifty pieces.

Fifth Man. No, no, it needs not; we know you would not sink upon us.

Orsames. I chuse, however, to do it. The first article is five guineas to the fortune-teller, as an earnest of the hundred she is to receive after my marriage with Lysetta. The second, is twenty pounds for a gold snuff-box, which I pretended to have brought from Philadelphia, and presented to her ladyship. The third, is about ten more, spent in three several jaunts I made with her to Richmond, Windsor, and Greenwich. The remainder, you may believe, might well be spent in donations to her servants, board-wages to my own man, paying my lodgings at two guineas a week, chair-hire, and other necessary expences.

First Man. You could do no less.

Second Man. Ay, ay, nothing of all this could have been spared. But what sum do you demand at present?

Orsames. I believe twenty pieces will defray the whole charges of the wedding, which is all I want; afterwards, my boys, I shall have enough for you all.

On this, every one turned out his pockets, and the sum was immediately made up, and laid upon the table; which Orsames put into his purse: and then some discourse ensued among this vicious company, which I chuse to pass over in silence, as it would be no fit entertainment for the chaste ears of my fair readers. Orsames staid with them about two hours, and then took his leave in order to sup with Lysetta, as she had desired he would. I accompanied him not thither, but went home to my own apartment, more full of confusion at the discovery I had made than I am able to express. Though I half despised Lysetta for the follies I had seen her guilty of; yet, when I reflected on her birth, and the character she had maintained in the world, I could not bear the thoughts of her becoming the victim of the base design concerted against her; and her fortune, reputation, and eternal peace of mind, the prey of such a nest of villains.

My whole study was now fully bent to snatch this unfortunate lady from that gulph of perdition she was upon the brink of, and so near plunging into. I was extremely divided in my thoughts what to do upon this occasion. To give her any hints concerning the dangers to which she exposed herself and reputation, by encouraging the addresses of a man whose character she was so little acquainted with, I knew would be in vain, as she had rejected all the warnings given her on that score, and refused to listen to the admonitions of her best friends and nearest kindred. I had it in my power, indeed, to inform her of much more than any of them could even guess at: but then I could not relate the scene I had been witness of, without discovering, at the same time, the secret of my Invisible Belt; which was by no means proper for me to entrust her with.

To acquaint her by letter with what I knew concerning Orsames, and the villainous conspiracy which had been formed to ruin her, I feared would be to as little purpose; and doubted not but she would look upon an anonymous intimation only as a piece of malice, and treat it with the contempt it might seem to merit. As this, however, was the only method I could take to save her, with any convenience to myself, I resolved to pursue it; and accordingly wrote to her next morning a full account of all I had been witness of between Orsames and his wicked companions. I made this letter be left at her house before the time in which she usually got out of bed, to the end she might have leisure to consider the contents, without being interrupted by any company coming in. As I was desirous of seeing in what manner she would receive this intelligence, I went, under cover of my Belt, and gained entrance just as she had finished the perusal.

Her behaviour was such as I apprehended it would be. She tore the letter, stormed, and cried out—'Was there 'ever so much impudence! Sure the 'person who sent this infamous scrawl 'must have a very mean opinion of my 'understanding, to think I could give 'the least credit to such a vile aspersion!—Orsames an impostor! a companion for thieves and vagabonds!—'ridiculous!' And then again—'This 'must certainly be a contrivance of some 'of my wife kindred to break off the 'match. I could find in my heart to 'send for Orsames, and marry him 'this instant, to shew how much I despise their little malice. But 'tis no 'matter; Tuesday will soon arrive, and 'that will put an end to all.'

I staid

I ſtaid a full hour, in the ſuppoſition that Orſames would make her a morning viſit; but finding, by ſome diſcourſe ſhe had with her maid, that ſhe did not expect him, and was making herſelf ready to go among the ſhops for things ſhe wanted, I quitted her apartment, much diſconcerted at the ill ſucceſs of what I had done. However, as I had little elſe to employ my time that day, I went again in the afternoon. Orſames was now there, and two ladies of Lyſetta's particular acquaintance. Whether ſhe had mentioned any thing to him of the letter, I cannot be certain; but am apt to think ſhe had not; for he appeared with an alertneſs which, by all I could diſcover, had nothing of conſtraint in it. Cards were called for; and they were juſt going to ſit down to whiſt, when word was brought to Lyſetta, that her couſin, Captain Platoon, was juſt arrived from Carliſle, and come to wait upon her; on which ſhe ordered him to be ſhewed up immediately. Orſames, who I perceived had turned pale as aſhes on hearing this gentleman's name, now roſe haſtily from his chair, and ſaid to Lyſetta—'I have juſt thought of ſome buſineſs 'I had to diſpatch—your ladyſhip muſt 'excuſe me—the affair that calls me is 'of conſequence—I cannot ſtay.'

She was going to make ſome reply, but the captain came that inſtant into the room. While he was paying his compliments to his couſin and the other ladies, Orſames had taken up his hat, and was endeavouring to ſlip out unperceived; but the quick-ſightedneſs of Lyſetta prevented him: ſhe ran to him, and catching hold of his ſleeve, ſaid—'You ſhall not go; at leaſt till I have 'preſented you to my couſin.' Then turning to the captain, ſaid—'This is a 'gentleman, couſin, whoſe acquaint-'ance, I believe, you will hereafter 'think yourſelf happy in.'

On this the captain advanced, with great politeneſs, to embrace the perſon his kinſwoman preſented to him; but had no ſooner fixed his eyes upon his face, than he ſtarted back with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, and cried out to Lyſetta—'What is the meaning of this, Ma-'dam? Who would you introduce to 'me?' She was opening her mouth to make ſome anſwer; but Orſames, who was drawing as faſt as he could towards the door, hindered her from ſpeaking, by ſaying, with a heſitating voice—'Madam, the gentleman does not ſeem 'to deſire any new acquaintance. I 'will wait on your ladyſhip another 'time.' In ſpeaking this, he got to the top of the ſtair-caſe; and, it is likely, would have made but one ſtep to the bottom, if the captain had not prevented him, by running to him, and catching faſt hold of him by the collar, dragged him back, ſaying, at the ſame time—'No, raſcal! you muſt not 'think to leave this place till you have 'confeſſed what devil gave you the im-'pudence to introduce yourſelf into ſuch 'company, and on what villainous de-'ſign you are thus diſguiſed in the ha-'bit of a gentleman.' Then addreſſing himſelf to Lyſetta, who ſtood as motionleſs as if transfixed with thunder, went on thus—'Madam, by what 'means ſoever this villain has impoſed 'on you, I do aſſure you, upon my ho-'nour, that two months ago he was a 'private man in Captain Cutcomb's 'company, and drummed out of the 'regiment for pig-ſtealing, and other 'miſdemeanors; for ſome of which, in-'deed, he ought to have been hanged.'

On theſe words Lyſetta ſcreamed out—'Oh, Heavens!' and fell into a ſwoon. The captain ſeeing this, quitted his priſoner, to run with the two ladies to her aſſiſtance; and Orſames took this opportunity of making his eſcape. Proper means being applied, ſhe ſoon recovered; and the ſwelling paſſions which had occaſioned this diſorder, vented themſelves in tears. The captain appeared a little impatient to know how ſhe became acquainted with ſuch a wretch as Orſames; but ſhe told him ſhe was not then in a condition to inform him of the particulars; ſaid ſhe was very ill, and muſt lie down, and deſired to ſee him another time: on which he took his leave, as did the two ladies; who knowing Orſames had profeſſed himſelf her lover, and the encouragement ſhe had given him, I could perceive ſmiled within themſelves at the diſcovery. Thus was Lyſetta preſerved from ruin; and had no other puniſhment for her folly, than being laughed at by thoſe who were privy to the affair. As for Orſames, I have ſince met him about town, in a very ſhabby and tattered condition. The gang of villains, his aſſociates, I believe, are diſperſed; and one of them has made his exit at Tyburn.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

TREATS ON VARIOUS MATTERS, SOME OF WHICH, THE AUTHOR DARES VENTURE TO ASSURE THE PUBLICK, WILL HEREAFTER BE FOUND NOT ONLY MORE ENTERTAINING, BUT ALSO OF MORE CONSEQUENCE, THAN AT PRESENT THEY APPEAR TO BE.

I Had been told that Lady Playfield's route was an aſſemblage of the moſt brilliant and polite perſons of both ſexes; and though I never had any great opinion of this ſort of meetings, yet I was tempted to go thither, in order to be myſelf a witneſs how far the deſcription that had been given me was conſonant to truth. As I am an entire ſtranger to her ladyſhip, and did not care for the formality of being introduced by any one who went there, I choſe to make this viſit in my Inviſible capacity. The great number of wax tapers, the ſparkle of the ladies jewels, and the extraordinary beauty of ſome among them, was dazzling to my eyes at firſt entrance: but I ſoon found that I had the ſame fault to find with this, as I had done in all other mixed company I ever ſaw; a kind of hurry and confuſion, which deſtroys that ſolid converſation that is ſo agreeable when only a few ſelect friends are met together. It was near nine o'clock when I went thither, yet there were ſeveral who came in after me. Lady Playfield received all of them with her accuſtomed politeneſs; but, for a great while, there was nothing in the ſalutations, on either ſide, which engroſſed my attention ſo far, as to make me ſpread my Tablets to retain it.

I was, indeed, quite indolent to every thing that was ſaid, till the entrance of Lady Allmode gave a little ſpur to my curioſity. I had heard much talk of this lady, not only for her being extravagantly fond of every new faſhion, but alſo for a certain peculiarity in her manner of converſation, which made her admired by people of a low education, and as much laughed at by thoſe of a ſuperior. I had been told that ſhe had an utter averſion to plain Engliſh; and to thorough a contempt for what ſhe called the vulgar way of ſpeaking, that when ſhe talked, even on the moſt common things, ſhe interlarded all ſhe ſaid with the hardeſt words ſhe could pick out of the dictionary, and frequently coined new ones of her own, which never were, nor ſcarce ever will be, found in any vocabulary. Lady Playfield, I perceived, received her with a great deal of reſpect. I was then at ſome diſtance; but, on finding they were entering into converſation, drew more near, to have an opportunity of hearing, and improving myſelf, by a perſon of whom ſo extraordinary a deſcription had been given me. After the firſt compliments were over, Lady Playfield addreſſed herſelf to her in theſe terms—

Lady Playfield. Though I am always happy when I ſee your ladyſhip, yet now I can ſcarce forbear complaining of your unkindneſs in coming without Miſs Arabella. I hear ſhe has been in town above a week.

Lady Allmode. I could not have been guilty of ſo enormous a ſoleciſm in good breeding, as not to have brought her to pay her duty to your ladyſhip, if there had been a poſſibility in nature to have done it.

Lady Playfield. I hope Miſs is well, Madam.

Lady Allmode. Perfectly ſo, Madam, as to her health; but ſuch a ſight! ſuch a figure!—a greater metamorphoſis than any in Ovid.

Lady Playfield. What does your ladyſhip mean?

Lady Allmode. Oh, Madam, the remoteſt corner of the moſt deſart of the three Arabias never produced ſuch a creature; ſuch a Tramontane, as the Italians elegantly phraſe it. Well, theſe people who live a great way from London, are ſuch abſurdians, ſuch awkwardities! Would your ladyſhip believe it? they ſent the girl home in a cap that quite covered the drum of her ears.

Lady Playfield. That might be to prevent her catching cold in the coach.

Lady Allmode. Oh, Jupiter! how am I ſurprized to hear your ladyſhip talk in this manner!—But this is not all. The girl had ſeveral new ſuits of cloaths, when ſhe left London, made in the genteeleſt taſte: but my country aunt taking it into her head, that either I had allowed too ſcanty a pattern, or that ſhe had outgrown them, out of mere good-

will and ſimplicity, has lengthened all her petticoats to ſuch a ridiculous ſize, that they almoſt come down to the buckles of her ſhoes; I proteſt one can ſcarce ſee whether ſhe has any ancles.

On this a gentleman, who ſtood pretty near, approached Lady Allmode; and, with a moſt ironical tone, replied to what ſhe had ſaid in theſe words—

Gentleman. Your ladyſhip muſt excuſe the miſtake your aunt has made. I fancy the faſhion of going half naked may not yet have reached ſo far as Wales.

Lady Allmode. You certainly ſpeak the rationalii of the thing, Sir. Few of theſe mountaineers regard any thing but loading their tables with proviſions, feaſting their tenants, paying their debts, ſtanding up for the liberties of their country, and ſuch like antiquated obſolete cuſtoms. For my part, all my faculties are immerged in a profoundity of aſtoniſhment, to think that my aunt could marry and ſettle among ſuch aliens to politeneſs, ſuch heathens to the laws of good-breeding and the drawing-room.

Gentleman. Perhaps, Madam, the cuſtoms and manners you mention were in vogue at the time of your aunt's marriage?

Lady Allmode. I proteſt, Sir, you have hit upon the ſolution of this enigma. It was, indeed, in the reign of Queen Anne that ſhe married.

I had ſeen enough of this fine lady, and did not chuſe to have my Tablets crouded with any more of her unintelligible jargon; ſo retired to another part of the room, where I ſaw three ladies got together, who ſeemed very earneſt in diſcourſe. But little was I like to be the better for my near approach; for being on the topick of ſcandal, each was ſo full, and ſo highly delighted with the thoughts of it, that all ſpeaking at the ſame time, prevented me from hearing diſtinctly what was ſaid by any of them; and all I could gather, at laſt, was, that a certain lady of their acquaintance had been caught with her footman.

As I had been informed of the particulars of this ſtory before, the foible of the tranſgreſſing fair did not ſo much engroſs my meditations, as the pleaſure thoſe of her own ſex ſeemed to take in expoſing it; and I could not help ſaying to myſelf, with the poet—

'There is a luſt in man, no charm can
'tame,
'Of loudly publiſhing his neighbour's ſhame.
'On eagle's wings immortal ſcandals fly;
'While virtuous actions are but born, and
'die.'

But this was a place more proper to collect matter for reflection hereafter, than to indulge it at preſent; ſo I paſſed on among the gaming-tables, which were eleven in number, and none of them unoccupied. Here it was pleaſant enough to obſerve the various attitudes of thoſe who played: and I think there is not a more ſure way of judging people's diſpoſitions, than to ſee them at this diverſion. Some of thoſe who ſwept the ſtakes, received the favours Fortune beſtowed on them with an eaſe and calmneſs which ſhewed they had not been over-anxious whether ſhe ſmiled or frowned; but there were many more, who ſnatched up the glittering metal with a greedineſs which ſufficiently demonſtrated that avarice was the chief excitement to what they did. As for the loſers, it gave me an infinite ſatisfaction to ſee the unconcerned behaviour of ſome few among them; while others, again, filled me with a no leſs ſenſible diſquiet at their impatience. I was aſhamed to find a gentleman of rank and fortune forget all politeneſs, and ſometimes even common decency, to thoſe who had his money in their pockets; and ſorry in my heart to ſee a lady bite her lips, wrinkle her forehead with unbecoming frowns, diſtort every feature, and diſfigure all the charms which nature had beſtowed on her, for the loſs of what was not worth half that anxiety to preſerve. 'Good Heaven!' ſaid I to myſelf, 'if this be the effect of gaming, 'what madneſs is it to venture one's 'peace in that uncertain gulph!'

The beautiful Iſmena was this night among the number of the unfortunates, but not of the impatients. I ſtood behind her chair, and ſaw her empty a well-filled purſe, and take out of it even the laſt guinea with a ſmile. She was, indeed, a young lady lately come to the poſſeſſion of a very large fortune, and could not want what ſhe had thrown away: but the ſame might alſo be ſaid of Clarinda, who played at the ſame table with her, and had alſo loſt a conſiderable ſum to Sir Charles Fairlove, with whom theſe two ladies had been engaged

engaged the whole evening at picquet. But see the difference! the latter of them rose from the table in a fury, tore her fan, and cried—

Clarinda. Curse the cards!—I will play no more this night, that I am resolved; at least with Sir Charles.

Ismena. Nay, Madam, we have no reason to be angry with Sir Charles, for having done by us what we would gladly have done by him. For my part, though he has stripped me of all I had about me, I am as good friends with him as ever.

Sir Charles. I hope so, Madam; otherwise the good luck I have had at play would prove the greatest misfortune of my life.

Clarinda. The devil's in the cards to-night, I think! I never lost at picquet in my life before; and now I have thrown away——I cannot justly say how much, but I'll see.

She then turned to the table, and poured out of a purse what was remaining in it; and having counted the sum, went on in the same heat as before.

Clarinda. Yes, by Heaven I thought so!—No less than six and twenty pieces!

Sir Charles. I should be sorry, Madam, to give you any disquiet on the score of such a trifle; but I can do no more than offer you a chance for regaining all you have lost. If you please, I will stake the whole against five of yours.

Clarinda. I should lose that too, I suppose.

Ismena. Venture it, however. If you lose it, I'll be your halves, and send you the money to-morrow morning.

Clarinda. Well, then, I will make one more essay.

With these words, she sat down again. They played; she was the winner; and now appeared as gay and happy as she had lately been discontented. Sir Charles smiled, with some disdain, at this reverse in her humour; and, turning to Ismena, said—

Sir Charles. Now, Madam, you must take up the winner.

Ismena. She must give me credit, then, Sir. You both know I have no stake to lay down.

Clarinda. You must excuse me for that, Madam; it may turn my luck. Besides, one has no heart to play, when one does not see the money on the table.

Sir Charles. Well, then, beautiful Ismena, I will give you credit; or, if you please, will play upon the square, my honour against yours.

Ismena. With all my heart, Sir Charles.

The ill-nature, the ill-manners, and, indeed, the ingratitude of Clarinda, in refusing to give the credit of a stake at cards to a friend who had just before offered to pay half the losses she should sustain in playing with another, made that young lady as disagreeable in my eyes, as the sweetness of disposition and generosity of the sprightly Ismena made her charming to a much greater degree than ever she had appeared to me before; all lovely, as it must be confessed she is. But, to proceed. Ismena having accepted the challenge of Sir Charles, she tried once more what chance would do for her: chance was still against her, and Sir Charles again the conqueror. The game being over, she said, laughing—

Ismena. Well, I may now sing—'Fortune is my foe;' and content myself, for the remainder of the night, with being an humble spectator, since I am not in a condition to play myself.

Sir Charles. It will be your own fault, then, Madam, if you are. I believe I have an hundred and some odd pieces about me, which are all at your service.

Ismena. I thank you, Sir Charles; but I do not chuse to risque so much at one sitting. I do not care, however, if I become your debtor for twenty pieces.

Sir Charles. You do me a pleasure, Madam, in accepting any part of the offer I made you. There is the trifle you mention: if you want more, I beg you will command it.

Ismena. No, Sir, I am determined to play no farther than this. I am much obliged to you for the favour, and will return it to-morrow morning.

Sir Charles. There is no occasion, Madam. I have business your way to-morrow morning; and, if you permit me that honour, will wait on you about twelve.

Ismena. You may depend, Sir, on my being at home.

Clarinda, who had not opened her mouth all this time, no sooner saw her fair friend receive the money, than she laid her hand on hers, and, with a gay

air, said to her—'Now, my dear, I am 'ready for you, if you please; and 'willing to venture as much with you 'as you have borrowed of Sir Charles.' To this Ismena replied, with more seriousness than she was wont to put on—'No, 'Madam, I have been very unlucky here, 'and am resolved to change hands; I 'see Lady Longmore has given out at 'the whist table yonder, I'll go and take 'her place.'

With these words, she rose hastily from her seat, and did as she had said. Sir Charles followed her to the other table, and stood behind her chair till he saw her win more than the sum he had lent her. On the company's breaking up, she looked round the room for Sir Charles, in order, as I suppose, to return the money to him; but if she had any such design, he had taken care to prevent it, by leaving the place before she had done playing. This action of Sir Charles, joined to some amorous glances I had perceived him to regard her with, made me suspect he had some farther view than mere complaisance in what he had done; but as he was generally accounted a man of honour, and she had an unblemished character, I suspended my judgment till I should see the event of the visit she promised to receive from him the next morning.

After I had quitted this scene of gay confusion, as Mr. Addison elegantly expresses it, and had time to ruminate on the transactions that evening had presented me with; Sir Charles and Ismena ran very much in my head, but did not so totally engross my attention, as to make me negligent to all others. I had heard several of the assembly say to each other, that Miss Allmode was a most beautiful young creature, and would certainly be the reigning toast of the town, if not spoiled by the affectation of her mother; and this distinct description gave me a curiosity both to see the girl, and in what manner her self-sufficient ladyship behaved towards her. Accordingly I laid down a plan for my progression the next morning, which was this: to go to Lady Allmode's early, and from thence to Ismena at the time Sir Charles had appointed. I then began to remember that the night was far advanced, and went to bed, as it is probable some of my readers may find it necessary to do at this time.

CHAP. VI.

CONTAINS SUCH THINGS AS ARE NOT OFTEN TO BE MET WITH, NEITHER IN THE ONE NOR THE OTHER SEX; YET ARE, OR AT LEAST OUGHT TO BE, EQUALLY INTERESTING TO BOTH.

I Rose next morning more early than I had been accustomed to do, in order to prepare for my two visits; but, in spite of all the expedition I could practise, I found myself obliged to postpone either the one or the other till another day. So much time was elapsed, first in transcribing what I had seen at Lady Playfield's, and then in getting the dialogues engraved on my Tablets expunged, by the pure fingers of my yet unpolluted virgin; that, when all was ready, the clock wanted but few minutes of twelve. I hesitated not whether I should go to Lady Allmode's or to Ismena; for, being prepossessed in favour of the latter, I went thither in a lucky time. Sir Charles Fairlove was just stepping out of his chair: I followed him up stairs; and Ismena received him with great gaicty, accompanied with an equal air of modesty. As soon as they were seated, she said to him—

Ismena. Your money was very fortunate, Sir Charles: I did not lose one guinea after I became your borrower.

Sir Charles. Madam, I congratulate myself for being so happy to serve you, though on so insignificant an occasion; but should be better pleased to have it in my power to do so in much greater things.

Ismena. I doubt not of your generosity; and, if ever I am reduced to the same exigence again, it is likely may have recourse to the same hand. In the mean time, Sir Charles, let me return the favour you have already conferred upon me.

Sir Charles. This trifle, Madam, is neither worth your returning nor my receiving; nor should I have ever thought on it, if I had not given you credit on an infinitely more valuable account.

Ismena. Credit! As how, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. Yes, Madam, a debt I am too impatient to wait long for the payment of, and am come to claim.

Ismena. You rally well, Sir Charles; but,

but, as I cannot comprehend the purport, am not prepared to give an anſwer.

Sir Charles. No, i'faith, Madam, you will find me extremely ſerious; ſure you cannot be ſo ſtrangely forgetful as not to recollect what you loſt to me laſt night at play?

Iſmena. I loſt nothing but what I paid, Sir Charles.

Sir Charles. Nothing, Madam?

Iſmena. No, upon my honour.

Sir Charles. You have named the very thing—your honour, Madam. When a lady ventures her honour at a gaming-table, and is ſo unlucky to loſe, ſhe muſt expect to pay the forfeit.

Iſmena. What do you mean, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. My meaning needs no explanation, Madam; you loſt your honour to me, and I now demand the immediate poſſeſſion of what I fairly won.

Iſmena. Ridiculous!

Sir Charles. Madam, the contempt with which you treat my pretenſions will not take away the validity of them. What was once your honour, is now no longer ſo, but mine, and at my diſpoſal; and you would not, ſure, go about to defraud me of the good that Fortune has beſtowed upon me?

With theſe words, he threw his arms about her waiſt, with a freedom, which ſhewed he indeed looked upon her as his own: ſhe ſeemed a little alarmed at this action, and, ſtarting from him, endeavoured to repulſe the temerity he was guilty of, by ſaying to him—

Iſmena. Forbear; this fooling is offenſive.

Sir Charles. Madam, this coyneſs is trifling; I am ſurprized you will oblige me to have recourſe to force for what is ſo much my due, and I ſhould ſet a higher value upon if chearfully reſigned.

He then catched hold of her a ſecond time, and made an offer to bear her into another room: the graſp he had taken of her, was not ſo ſtrenuous, however, but that ſhe eaſily diſengaged herſelf; and, having done ſo, cried out with a voice and air full of the extremeſt diſdain—

Iſmena. Till this action, I ſcarce could think you were in earneſt. Baſe, preſuming man, how dare you entertain thoughts ſo unworthy of me!

Sir Charles. How dare you, Madam, hazard on the chance of a game at cards what ſeems ſo precious to you?

Iſmena. Oh, deſpicable! to turn that into a matter of ſerioufneſs which was only meant in jeſt!

Sir Charles. We men, Madam, take all the advantages we can, when we play with a fine woman; and you may be aſſured, I ſhall not eaſily be prevailed upon to relinquiſh thoſe I have gained over you.

Iſmena. The vain idea will little avail your vile purpoſe.

Sir Charles. You may be miſtaken, Madam: the laws of Weſtminſter Hall, indeed, will ſcarcely take any cognizance of an affair of this nature; but thoſe laws by which the polite world are governed, I mean the laws of gaming, will infallibly give it on my ſide. That pride of yours will be humbled, when you ſee your ſtake of honour become the publick jeſt, and all that has paſſed between us the ſubject of a news-paper.

Iſmena. I am confounded! You cannot certainly be the monſter you appear!

Sir Charles. I would not wiſh you, Madam, to put me to the proof.

Iſmena. Oh, Heavens! to what has one unguarded word expoſed me!

She could not utter this exclamation without letting fall ſome tears, which I perceived had a great effect on Sir Charles, by the change it occaſioned in his countenance: he affected, however, to take no notice of it, and reſuming his former boldneſs, went on—

Sir Charles. You ſee, Madam, how it is; you are entirely in my power; and, if I cannot have my agreement, I will have my revenge, or at leaſt an equivalent for both.

Iſmena. What equivalent!

Sir Charles. You muſt redeem your forfeited honour by a ſum of money.

Iſmena. Name it, then.

Sir Charles. Let me conſider, Madam—a woman's honour, as times now are, and beauty renders itſelf ſo cheap, will bear but a low price at the market; but, as you are well-born, well accompliſhed, are extremely handſome, and have more perfections than moſt of your ſex can boaſt of, I think five hundred pounds is the leaſt I can demand.

Iſmena. You ſhall have it, Sir.

With this, ſhe ran haſtily to a little cabinet that ſtood in the room, and having taken from thence what ſhe wanted, turned again to the table, ſaying—

Iſmena. Thoſe two Bank-bills, Sir, contain the ſum you mention; take them, and eaſe me of your preſence.

Sir Charles. I muſt firſt examine, Madam,

Madam, if they are genuine: yes, they are right; and now, methinks, 'tis pity to rob you of so much money; five hundred pounds will purchase five hundred pretty trinkets, and I cannot receive it without feeling some concern.

Ismena. Oh, you need be under no concern on that score; were it five times the sum, I would gladly give it to be rid for ever, both of you and your impudent demand.

Sir Charles. Yet, in spite of all this severity, I shall willingly restore these bills on one condition.

Ismena. Sir, I shall make no conditions with you; therefore, be gone, and leave me.

Sir Charles. Not till you have heard me, Madam. The condition I would stipulate, is only this, that you will make a solemn promise never to play again, except for mere diversion, with some select friends, who you are certain will take no ungenerous advantage of you.

Ismena. There is little occasion for me to bind myself by a promise to avoid a thing which has already proved so mischievous: the insults I have received from you, will make me detest the sight of cards, and fly the society of all who pursue that dangerous amusement.

Sir Charles. It is enough; my ends are answered: and thus, on my knees, let me restore your bills, and with them, a heart which long has been devoted to you, and never harboured a wish to your dishonour.

Never had I known greater anxiety for any thing not relating to myself, or my particular friends, than I did for the issue of this conversation. I had been extremely scandalized at some part of Sir Charles's behaviour; yet, by many indications, could not set him down in my mind for the mercenary villain he affected to be; and was now as much rejoiced to see a likelihood of not having been deceived in my conjectures in his favour, as the reader will presently be convinced. Ismena, being too much amazed at this sudden turn to make an immediate reply, he went on thus, still kneeling—

Sir Charles. Oh, Ismena, forgive the seeming brutality I have been guilty of; I counterfeited the libertine, the villain, only to shew you there was a possibility for you to have met with such a one in reality; and assumed the most odious character, in order to render yours more truly amiable. The tender passion you inspired me with, has made me keep a watchful eye over all your actions. I found you perfect in every thing except a too great readiness to follow the example of others in the destructive love of play. I know the dangers to which your sex are exposed by it, and that there were many snares spread for your innocence in particular; by this means, even last night, there were some in company who wanted but the same opportunity I had to behave as I have done, though with far different views. Oh! pardon, therefore, the only stratagem I could think of to clear your mind of a propensity which might in time have sullied all it's brightness.

Ismena. Rise, Sir Charles; the diversity, I might say, indeed, the perplexity of my thoughts, hindered me, till now, from observing the posture you were in. Pray be seated, Sir. If I may give credit to your words, I am infinitely obliged to you for the care you took of my reputation, when you saw it so totally neglected by myself.

Sir Charles. No, Madam, say not so; I dare believe you never have failed in a due regard for your reputation, and am certain that the breath of slander has never presumed to blast it; and I could not mean to reproach you for any thing that has been, but to warn you against what might be. An immoderate inclination for gaming in your sex, I take to be the same as an immoderate inclination to drinking is in ours: both are equally intoxicating and destructive to right reason; they make the brain grow giddy, incapable of reflection, or any other pursuit than the darling folly; and they run headlong on, enveloped in a mist of errors, where fortune, fame, and peace of mind, are sometimes irrecoverably lost.

Ismena. Oh, Sir Charles, you have opened my eyes to see what my inadvertency might one day have plunged me in.

Sir Charles. I know very well, Madam, you wanted only to be reminded of the danger, to enable you to avoid it. The manner in which I have done so, may have, perhaps, appeared too presuming; but I feared more gentle methods might not have had the effect.

Ismena. Make no apologies, Sir Charles; I am now convinced you meant me well, and I thank you for it.

Sir Charles. If you accept it as a proof of friendship, it may in time engage

gage you to believe, that a ſincere and tender friendſhip in a perſon of my ſex to one of yours, deſerves a ſofter name, and call it love.

Iſmena. We will not cavil about names; but muſt acknowledge, Sir Charles, by what motive ſoever you have been actuated, the benefit is mine.

Sir Charles. How bleſs'd am I in this confeſſion! But, charming Iſmena, may I not be permitted to wait on you ſometimes, and have leave to hope the ſervices I ſhall hereafter pay will not be rejected?

Iſmena. I flatter myſelf with being able to regulate my future conduct, ſo as not to give you occaſion to offer any of that frightful ſort you have done this morning; and, if I ſhould relapſe into my former errors, could neither expect nor deſerve you ſhould take the ſame trouble for my reformation.

She ſpoke theſe words with ſo obliging a ſmile, that Sir Charles could not forbear teſtifying the tranſport he was in, by imprinting ſeveral paſſionate kiſſes on one of her hands; after which, looking on her with an equal mixture of tenderneſs and reſpect, he ſaid—

Sir Charles. Incomparable Iſmena! how impoſſible is it for me to expreſs either what you deſerve, or what I feel in a full ſenſibility of your perfections!

Iſmena. I deſire you will not go about to expreſs either the one or the other. The only merit I can boaſt of is, in being ſo early convinced of my fault; and that I am ſo, is wholly owing to yourſelf. For I confeſs to you, Sir Charles, that though it is but lately I have begun to like play at all, yet, by converſing with thoſe who ſeem to have no other way of paſſing their time, it grew by very ſwift degrees more pleaſing to me; and I believe that it would, in time, have become ſo habitual to me, that I ſhould have expected the hour of ſitting down to cards as naturally as that of ſitting down to dinner. But, in the mirror you have preſented to me, I now ſee, that to indulge this amuſement to an exceſs, is not only a folly below the dignity of a thinking mind, but alſo a kind of Scylla or Charybdis, formed by ourſelves in the ocean of life, as if on purpoſe to wreck our fortunes, honour, reputation, and every thing that is dear.

Sir Charles. Oh, Madam! every word you ſpeak on this occaſion thrills me to the very ſoul; I am charmed, I am raviſhed to find in you ſuch ſolid reaſon, ſuch an amazing quickneſs of apprehenſion.

Iſmena. You are relapſing into the panegyrick ſtrain; but I will hear no more of it. You muſt give me leave to play the monitor in my turn; I have been your convert, and you muſt now be mine. Remember, Sir Charles, that to liſten to the tongue of flattery, is no leſs pernicious than the folly you have taught me to be aſhamed of.

Sir Charles. I grant it, Madam; but the juſt praiſes of real virtue cannot cauſe a bluſh either in the face of the giver or receiver.

Iſmena. Well, I find you will have the better of the argument, whether the tenet you take upon you to maintain be right or wrong; therefore, to put an end to it, what think you of a turn or two in the Mall this morning?

Sir Charles. Madam, I ſhall be happy to attend you any where.

She then called for her capuchin and little muff; which being immediately brought, Sir Charles gave her his hand to lead her down ſtairs, and I retired to my apartment.

I had met with nothing a great while that gave me a more ſenſible ſatisfaction, than to find a lady, in all the pride of blooming youth, beautiful, gay, and ſurrounded with a crowd of flatterers, bear with ſo much chearfulneſs the conviction of her error, and teſtify ſo much gratitude to the perſon to whom ſhe was indebted for her reformation. The rough method he had taken for this purpoſe, was ſo far from raiſing any reſentment in her, after once knowing the motive, that ſhe looked upon him as her beſt friend, eſteemed, and loved him for it; conſcious that it required no leſs than ſuch a proceeding to rouze her from that thoughtleſſneſs which alone had made her fall into an error, the danger of which ſhe might otherwiſe have too late perceived.

I thought I had diſcovered ſomething in theſe two accompliſhed perſons, that ſeemed to me as if Heaven had ordained them for each other, and I ſoon found I had not been miſtaken. They are now married with the higheſt approbation of all friends on both ſides; and, in the opinion of as many as have the pleaſure of

of their acquaintance, bid fair to be one of the moſt happy pairs that ever entered into Hymen's bands.

CHAP. VII.

THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN IN SOME DEBATE WITHIN HIMSELF, WHETHER HE SHOULD INSERT OR NOT, AS HE IS CONSCIOUS IT WILL BE LITTLE RELISHED BY THE FASHIONABLE GENTEEL PART OF HIS READERS.

THERE is ſomething very unaccountable in an over-curious diſpoſition; it makes us eager, impatient, anxious, indefatigable, in prying into things which promiſe us not the leaſt pleaſure in the diſcovery of when known. A reader who has not this propenſity in his nature, will doubtleſs think, by what I ſaid of Lady Allmode in the fifth chapter, that I had already ſeen enough of her behaviour to keep me from being deſirous of ſeeing more. But as every one is willing to find ſome excuſe or other, even for the filleſt things he can be guilty of, ſo I thought, that in being a ſpectator of Lady Allmode's conduct in her own family, and the manner in which ſhe trained up her daughter, ſomething might preſent itſelf to me that would more than compenſate for the time I ſhould expend in going to her houſe.

Accordingly I went, and gained an eaſy acceſs, the door happening to be open juſt as I reached it, to let out a footman in a gay livery, who had come to deliver ſome meſſage; but was a good deal bewildered on my entrance, as I had never been in the houſe before, and was entirely unacquainted with the ſituation of any of the rooms. The meaſure of time is always doubled when we wait for an event with impatience. I remained not long, however, in this dilemma: a ſervant running haſtily up the back ſtairs, with ſome drinking glaſſes on a ſilver waiter in his hand, I followed him into a room where a woman, by her appearance, I gueſſed was her ladyſhip's Abigail, received from him what he brought, and carried it into an inner chamber, the door of which ſhe ſhut after her, but not ſo ſuddenly as to prevent my entering with her.

Here I found Lady Allmode; but had ſhe appeared to me in any other place, ſhould never have known her for the ſame I had ſeen at Lady Playfield's route; ſo vaſt a difference is it in the power of art ſometimes to make. At the time of my coming in, ſhe was under the operation of having her eyebrows ſhaped with a ſmall pair of pincers, by one of thoſe perſons who go by the name of tyre-women; but, in my opinion, ought rather to be called face-menders, ſince their buſineſs is not ſo much to ornament the head as to rectify the defects of the features. The important work being over, Lady Allmode turned to a magnifier that ſtood upon her toilet, to ſee if all was right; and having looked into it, cried out haſtily—

Lady. Oh, Mrs. Prim, ſure your eyes are in eclipſe to-day! you have left no leſs than three exuberant hairs on my right brow, and I think arch'd it ſomewhat higher than the other.

Mrs. Prim. I beg pardon of your ladyſhip, but I will preſently remedy that error.

On this the artiſt employed her little inſtrument for a ſecond eſſay; after which Lady Allmode looked in the glaſs again, and ſaid—

Lady. It is very well now; but I look wretchedly to-day, and it is no wonder. What do you think, Mrs. Prim? That careleſs oaf there put me to bed laſt night without my ſpermaceti maſk.

Mrs. Prim. That was a great omiſſion, indeed, Madam; but your ladyſhip muſt forgive it, Mrs. Pinup does not uſe to neglect theſe things.

Pinup. I am very ſorry for it, Mrs. Prim; but it was ſo late when her ladyſhip went to bed, and her ladyſhip was ſo ſleepy.

Lady. And your foolſhip ſo ſleepy too, I ſuppoſe. But that is not all, Mrs. Prim; the creature threw it into ſome corner or other where Veni got at it, and this morning it was found half devoured.

Pinup. Your ladyſhip knows I have almoſt cried my eyes out about it, and that I offered to beſpeak another, and pay for it out of my own pocket.

Lady. Pay for it, ideot!—But tell me, creature, what atonement can'ſt thou ever make for theſe depredations on my countenance? Here I ſhall loſe a whole day; for 'tis impoſſible I can think of appearing in publick.

Mrs. Prim.

Mrs. Prim. I dare anſwer for Mrs. Pinup, that ſhe will never be guilty of the like fault again; therefore I beg your ladyſhip will forgive her.

Lady. Yes, yes, I have forgiven her, and I do forgive her; but ſhe muſt expect to be told of it ſometimes: if ſhe had lived with ſome ladies, they would have turned her out of doors that inſtant; *mais toujours les douceurs du cour* lay an embargo on my indignation.

Pinup. Your ladyſhip is all goodneſs.

Lady. Well, well, ſay no more about it; I am ſorry I ſtruck you; but take the Dreſden ſuit I had on yeſterday, and let me ſee you in it.

Pinup. I humbly thank your ladyſhip.

Lady. Say no more of it. Oh, *mon Dieu!* I begin to feel the effects of my diſconcertion; every membrane through my whole frame has a puiſation in it; give me ſomething to take this inſtant, or I ſhall faint. But as to the ſpermaceti maſk, is it not poſſible for you to get one ready for me before I ſleep, elſe my face will be a perfect nutmeg-grater by to-morrow morning?

Mrs. Prim. Oh, your ladyſhip need be under no apprehenſion on that ſcore, I always keep ſeveral; they want only ſprinkling with a little orange-flower water, to take off the ſcent; I will ſend your ladyſhip one this afternoon. Has your ladyſhip any farther commands?

Lady. Yes, you may ſend me a box of red for my cheeks; but do not let it be quite ſo high-coloured as the laſt.

Mrs. Prim. I ſhall take care to mix it ſo as to pleaſe your ladyſhip.—In ſpeaking this, ſhe made her exit with abundance of low curtſies.

Pinup was returning to her lady's chamber, but met her juſt coming out, in order to paſs into another room: on ſeeing her ſhe ſaid to her—

Lady. I think this girl takes a long time in dreſſing; go and ſee if ſhe is ready, and bid her come to me.

Finding now that there was ſome probability of my ſeeing the young lady, which had been, indeed, the chief motive of my going thither, I attended Lady Allmode where ſhe went, and placed myſelf in one corner of the room; where I did not wait above three or four minutes before Pinup, who had gone immediately on her errand, returned leading Miſs Allmode. She ſeemed to be about fourteen years of age; her face was extremely pretty, and I believe nature had given her a ſhape no leſs excellent, if it had not been deformed by her ſtay-maker. On her approach, Lady Allmode took her by the arm, turned her round ſeveral times, and examined her whole dreſs from head to foot; after which, looking very well pleaſed, ſhe ſaid—

Lady. Ay, Miſs, now you look like what you are; I proteſt, I ſcarce knew you for my own child, in the obſolete condition you came from the country. Are you not highly delighted with yourſelf?

Miſs. No, indeed, Madam; I think, ſince 'tis the faſhion to have one's cloaths made in this manner, there ought to be as many chimnies in a room as there are chairs.

Lady. Sure, Miſs, you are not cold?

Miſs. It would be very ſtrange, Madam, if I were not, when my ſtays are ſo contrived that the air comes down to the very bottom of my back, and below the pit of my ſtomach; and my petticoats ſo ſhort, that I am every minute fancying I have tucked them up in order to have my legs and feet waſhed; then as to my ears, I do declare I feel the wind blow from the one to the other, and pierces into my very brain.

Lady. O fye, Miſs; this being in the country has ſpoiled you. Whatever is the faſhion is never either too cold or too hot.

Miſs. I muſt beg your ladyſhip's pardon; for I am certain this faſhion is a great deal too much of both. The tightneſs of my ſleeves, the load of flounces at my elbow, and the huge ſemicircles, as heavy as panniers, hanging on each hip, make ſome parts of me ſweat, while all the reſt are freezing.

Lady. Oh hideous! Frightful!—Sweat! What a word is there from the mouth of a fine young lady! Whenever you have occaſion to complain of too much warmth, you ſhould always ſay, I perſpire. But I am ſurprized you ſhould not be charmed with ſo becoming a dreſs.

Miſs. I feel uneaſy, and quite uncomfortable, Madam.

Lady. A little uſe will reconcile you to it. Without vanity, Miſs, you are exceeding handſome; and now I have made you fit to appear in publick, the praiſes that will be given you, and the

fine things said to you, will raise such a *gaieté du coeur*, as will make you forget all that you call uncomfortable.

Miss. I should be glad, Madam, if any thing would do that.

Lady. You must learn to know yourself, Miss. Look in the glass; you have fine eyes, a very lovely mouth, a well-turned face, a delicate complexion, good hair; in fine, you are a compleat beauty. But what is beauty without the possessor understands how to manage it to advantage? A milk-maid may be a beauty, and no one take any notice of her. You must practise the art of displaying every charm, and rendering yourself conspicuous.

Miss. Indeed, Madam, I am quite ignorant of these things.

Lady. I perceive you are, Miss; but that is not your fault; my formal aunt has never given you any instructions in this point, I suppose: a few lessons, however, will soon put you in the way to make the most of what nature has bestowed upon you. In the first place, Miss, you must be sure to thrust out your chin as far as you are able; when you come into a room, always let your chin be the first thing seen of you, as if it were the harbinger of the rest of your person. Secondly, you must never keep your two hands together, in that stiff country manner you now do, for above the space of a moment; but throw sometimes the one and sometimes the other carelessly back, and lean it on your hip; but when you are speaking, be sure you employ both in gestures that may enforce attention to what you say. Then, as for your eyes, Miss, you must always keep them broad open, and be sure to have the last look of every one that takes notice of you.

Miss. Does your ladyship mean the men as well as the women?

Lady. Undoubtedly, the men to chuse. A polite woman, and who is fashionably genteel, is never ashamed of any thing she either sees or hears.

Her ladyship was going on with some farther directions concerning the management of the eyes, when she was interrupted by a footman, who came to acquaint her, that a person who called himself Monsieur Le Petit Solee had brought her ladyship a dozen pair of French shoes; on which she cried out in a kind of transport—'Oh, bring him up! bring 'him up this minute! I have been involved in the utmost distress; I have 'had nothing but odious English shoes 'upon my feet for a whole week past.'

As I was now heartily weary of my situation, and had no curiosity to see either Monsieur Le Petit Solee, or his French shoes, I took the opportunity of the door being open, and left this scene of folly and affectation, regretting the time I had thrown away in being there.

CHAP. VIII.

WHEREIN THE POWER OF BEAUTY, WHEN ACCOMPANIED WITH VIRTUE, IS DISPLAYED, IN A VERY REMARKABLE, AS WELL AS AFFECTING OCCURRENCE.

VANITY, though placed rather among the follies than the vices of human nature, is yet sometimes productive of the very worst we can be guilty of; and the least mischief it does, when indulged to an excess, is to render the person possessed of it obstinate, proud, impatient of contradiction, deaf to reproof, full of imaginary merit, and apt to despise what is truly so in another. This weakness, to give it no worse a name, is generally ascribed to the softer sex; who being from their very childhood accustomed to flattery and praise, are too ready to believe they are in reality the angels and goddesses they are told they are: but, in my opinion, it is doing great injustice to the ladies, to say they are the only culpable; since we often find men who, without having the same excuse, are no less liable to fall into the same error.

Mutantius is one of the most graceful and most accomplished gentlemen of the present age. He has learning, wit, honour, generosity, and good-nature. In fine, he is such as might give him a just title to universal admiration, were he but a little less conscious of deserving it. To render his fine qualities yet more conspicuous, he had the advantages of being descended from a very ancient family, and in possession of an ample fortune. He had not long been arrived at age, before several considerable matches were proposed to him: all the men of his acquaintance, who had sisters or daughters, courted his alliance. Whenever he appeared, the ladies put on their best

beſt looks; and not a few there were, who could not help betraying by their eyes the ſecret languiſhment of their hearts.

Having his choice of ſo many, was probably the cauſe that for a long time hindered him from attaching himſelf to any particular object. He was polite and gallant to all, but made a ſerious addreſs to none. He would pay his morning devoirs to one, walk in the Mall with another, dine with a third, drink tea with a fourth, attend a fifth to the play, or ſome other publick entertainment: in a word, he divided his reſpects ſo equally between each, that no one had reaſon either to exult on the power of her own charms, or dread thoſe of her competitors. The little deity of ſoft deſires would not, however, ſuffer a man ſo formed for love to remain always among the number of inſenſibles. At length, a glance ſhot from Ariſtella's eyes was a dart that reached his very ſoul; all the different graces he had ſeen in other beauties, ſeemed now to him to be ſummed up in her.

Ariſtella was, indeed, very lovely, and had been well educated; but her father, by gaming and other extravagancies, had reduced his eſtate ſo low, that when divided between four daughters, which he left at his deceaſe, the income was ſcarce ſufficient to buy them cloaths according to their birth. Two of them, however, were married to tradeſmen of good repute in the city; and a third to a gentleman of a ſmall eſtate in the country. Ariſtella, who was the youngeſt, and the only one unprovided for, lived ſometimes with one, and ſometimes with another, of the ſiſters; and by this means, having few expences beſides her dreſs, was enabled to appear in as genteel a manner as any woman of a moderate fortune could do.

It was at the houſe of one of her brother-in-law's, who was a linen-draper, and ſerved Mutantius with hollands and cambricks, that he firſt beheld her. Happening to call there when the maſter was abroad, he was deſired to walk into the parlour till his return. Ariſtella was at work with her ſiſter when he came in; but the latter, knowing he was a good cuſtomer, threw aſide what ſhe was about, and received him with a great deal of politeneſs. Her huſband not coming home ſo ſoon as he was expected, ſhe made tea. Mutantius readily accepted the little regale ſhe preſented to him, as it gave him an opportunity of feaſting his eyes on her fair ſiſter. On their entering into converſation, the tongue of Ariſtella loſt her nothing of what her eyes had gained; and as her beauty had in an inſtant captivated his heart, ſo her wit rivetted the chain, and made the conqueſt ſure.

The tradeſman at laſt returning, Mutantius, after having agreed for ſome things he wanted in the ſhop, and ordered them to be ſent home, took an unwilling leave; but carried with him an idea, which had afterwards more influence than he at firſt imagined. Love, in it's beginnings, plays wantonly about the heart, tickling it with flattering images; but having once got full poſſeſſion there, rules with tyrannick ſway, and bears down all before it. Mutantius indulged the pleaſing contemplation of Ariſtella's beauty till he was no longer able to live without ſeeing her, and for this purpoſe went again to the linen-draper's, pretending there were ſome things he had forgot to beſpeak when he was there before. After having bought thoſe things which the ſeeming want of had given him an excuſe for going thither ſo ſoon again, and ſome previous diſcourſe on ordinary matters, he told the draper that he ſhould be glad to have his wife's advice concerning the trimming of ſome ſhirts which were then making for him. To this the other replied, that his wife would think herſelf honoured in doing him any ſervice, but that ſhe was at that time unfortunately abroad.

Mutantius was not ſorry to hear ſhe was out of the way; and reſumed, briſkly—'Well, then, I think it will be 'equal to me, if the young lady who 'was with her when I had the pleaſure 'of drinking tea here, will do me that 'favour; ſhe ſeemed, I thought, to 'have good-nature enough to grant 'ſuch a requeſt.'—'You mean my ſiſter, Sir,' cried the draper. 'I think 'your wife called her ſo,' anſwered Mutantius. 'Yes, Sir,' rejoined the former; 'but ſhe is gone down to Kent 'this morning.'—'I thought ſhe had 'lived with you,' ſaid Mutantius. 'Not 'conſtantly, Sir,' replied he; 'but ſhe 'has left us now ſooner than ſhe would 'have done, on account of her ſiſter's 'lying-in.'

It was eaſy for a man of ſo much wit,

and of so much design as Mutantius now had in his head, to get from the honest, unsuspecting draper, all he wanted to be informed of in relation to the circumstances of Aristella. As the inclinations of this gentleman, vehemently amorous as they were, had not at present the least tendency to marriage with the young beauty, concerning whose affairs he had been so inquisitive, he was far from being mortified on hearing she had no fortune, and was in a manner dependant upon her kindred; nor thought it less conducive to the interest of his passion that she was removed into the country, where he imagined he might find a more easy method of winning her to his desires than he could have done in town, under the eye of a sister who, by the little he had seen of her, he perceived to be a woman of great discretion. He lost no time; but the very next day, attended by one servant, posted down to Canterbury, within a quarter of a mile of which city Aristella at present resided.

Having no acquaintance in that part of the country, he took up his lodgings in one of the best inns; where pretending that it was mere curiosity to see that ancient city which had brought him thither several offered to accompany him to those places which most deserved the attention of a traveller. Among the number of these hospitable persons was the brother-in-law of Aristella. It is easy to suppose that Mutantius made use of all the arts he was master of to insinuate himself into the good graces of a person whose acquaintance was so necessary to his design: and, indeed, had not this accident happened, there seemed little probability of his accomplishing them; for Aristella kept so close in the house, that though he had been four days at Canterbury, and taken all imaginable pains to get a glimpse of her, he never yet had been so happy.

Mutantius had something in him no less engaging to the men, than enchanting to the women: he knows how to suit himself to the humour of every one he converses with; it was therefore not difficult for him to cultivate a friendship with a plain country gentleman, who, free from all guile, was equally free from all distrust. Beechly, for so he was called, had no other fault than loving his bottle too well; which Mutantius perceiving, fell in with this foible, and thereby gained his whole heart.

These two gentlemen drinking together very late, Mutantius had plied the other so fast with glasses, that he became more than ordinarily intoxicated. Our lover obliged him to suffer himself to be attended home by his footman, and the next morning sent a polite message to enquire of his health. Beechly took this so kindly, that he came immediately after to the lodgings of Mutantius, to shew that he was well, and to desire he would do him the honour of dining with him that day. 'My wife,' said he, 'is in the straw: but she has a sister, who 'is at present with us; a good, smart, 'well behaved girl, and will receive you 'in the best manner she is able.'

It is not to be doubted, but that the heart of Mutantius fluttered with the most rapturous sensation, on hearing himself invited to a place where he was sure of enjoying the company of her he so much languished for, and had taken such pains to pursue. It is needless to say that he readily accepted so obliging a summons, nor that he prolonged the hour of complying with it. He was met by Beechly, at the gate, with all imaginable demonstrations of a sincere welcome, and conducted into the parlour; where Aristella, who soon after entered, was presented to him.

Whatever emotions Mutantius might feel in approaching to salute her, they were yet inferior to hers, in the first surprize of seeing him there. She had heard her brother Beechly talk of a fine gentleman lately come to Canterbury, and had that morning received orders from him to prepare a handsome dinner for his entertainment; but as she had not heard him mention the name of his new friend, and had no curiosity to ask any thing concerning him, could little expect he was the same she had seen at her other sister's in London. She had, it seems, from the first interview with him, been possessed of sentiments in his favour; which, if not altogether so passionate as those she inspired him with, were yet no less soft and tender: but, conscious of the vast disparity between their fortunes, she had endeavoured to check the growth of an inclination which she thought could only be destructive of her peace. But on this second and unexpected meeting him again, the stifled

wishes

wiſhes of her ſoul burſt out afreſh; a ſudden flow of joy ruſhed over her heart; which, joined to the ſurprize ſhe was in, ſpread a kind of veil; though agreeable confuſion, in her eyes and voice, while ſhe made him thoſe compliments which civility exacted from her to a ſtranger.

Mutantius, to whoſe penetrating eyes the change in her countenance was very viſible, looked on it as a happy preſage of the ſucceſs of his deſigns: and the ſecret pleaſure this imagination gave him, brightened all his air, and added new graces to every thing he ſaid or did; ſo that Ariſtella became now quite loſt in love and admiration. This day proved, indeed, extremely fortunate to Mutantius: dinner was no ſooner over, than Beechly was called out to a perſon who waited to ſpeak with him on ſome buſineſs in another room; the lover took this opportunity of declaring his paſſion to his miſtreſs, and relating to her the pains he had taken to get a ſight of her; and the anſwers ſhe made, though very modeſt and diſcreet, were ſuch as gave him no reaſon to deſpair. Beechly returning he broke off their converſation: he took Mutantius to ſhew him his garden; which, though not ornamented with ſtatues, nor any exotick curioſities, were very pretty. Mutantius was laviſh in his praiſes on every thing he ſaw; but, above all, his fancy ſeemed taken with a long graſs walk, and a cloſe arbour at the end of it. 'If I had ſuch a walk 'as this in town,' ſaid he, 'I ſhould 'never trouble the Mall, Vauxhall, nor 'Ranelagh.'—'Since you cannot carry 'this with you,' replied Beechly, 'you 'ſhall be extremely welcome to make 'as much uſe of it as you think fit, 'while you ſtay in this part of the 'world.'

Mutantius thanked him; but ſaid he was an early riſer, and ſhould chuſe ſuch a walk chiefly for the ſake of meditation in a morning, and that to come at ſuch hours might give too much trouble to the ſervants. 'I can eaſily remedy 'that difficulty, ſince you make it one,' anſwered the other. 'There is a door 'that opens behind the arbour into a 'little field, where I keep a cow: I ſel- 'dom have occaſion to make uſe of the 'key, and it is at your ſervice; ſo you 'may come in as early or as late as you 'pleaſe, without diſturbing any of my 'family, or being diſturbed by them.'

The lover made a thouſand acknowledgments to him for this favour, and received the key; which, in his mind, he looked upon as a ſure paſſport to all the happineſs he wiſhed at preſent to enjoy.

He went the next morning, taking a book in his hand, to prevent ſuſpicion, in caſe he ſhould be ſeen; though there was no great danger of that, as Beechly kept but two maids, and one man ſervant; who, it might be ſuppoſed, had too much buſineſs in a morning to ramble in the garden: but he might reaſonably hope to meet with Ariſtella; who, having nothing to employ her time, might probably amuſe ſome part of it in that agreeable place. It is likely, however, he might have been diſappointed for many days together, if Fortune had not now befriended him, as ſhe had hitherto done during the courſe of this adventure.

Ariſtella was there, indeed, before him, in the ſame walk, and very near the arbour through which he entered. She had come thither to gather cinquefoil for her ſiſter, the nurſe who attended her being apprehenſive ſhe would fall into a feveriſh diſorder. It is likely ſhe was little leſs ſurprized, on ſeeing him in that place, than ſhe had been when introduced to him by her brother; but as I was not preſent, and have this part of the ſtory from the report of others, can relate nothing of the particulars of their diſcourſe; and only ſay, in general, that he ſpared no vows nor proteſtations to convince her of his paſſion; and that he prevailed on her to return to him again after having carried in the herbs. His entreaties, joined to her own ſecret inclinations, engaged her to ſee him the next day. This meeting was ſucceeded by another, that by a third, and ſo on for ſeveral mornings together, every one of them ſtill more endearing him to her affections; but in ſpite of the pleaſure ſhe took in his addreſſes, ſhe could not keep herſelf from ſome doubt of the ſincerity of his paſſion, whenever ſhe reflected on the inequality of their fortunes. One day, expreſſing herſelf very emphatically on that occaſion, he cried out—'Talk not of fortune; by Hea- 'ven, your heart is all I wiſh!' This he repeated ſo often, and ſo tenderly, that ſhe at length confeſſed it was already his.

Having brought her to this point, he now thought proper to let her know the real

real aim of all his courtship: he began with telling her, that beauty such as hers merited to be set off with all the advantages of dress and grandeur; that she had wasted too much of her youth on a mean dependance on her kindred; and concluded with the offer of a large settlement; protesting to her, at the same time, that he would never marry any other woman, and that she should live in every thing like his wife except the name.

If a dagger had pierced the gentle breast of Aristella, it could not have given her more pain than did this cruel declaration. For some moments she was unable to make any reply, but burst into a flood of tears, and discovered all the symptoms of the most violent grief. He endeavoured to calm this tempest in her mind by all the arts that love and wit could inspire: but all was now in vain; a virtuous pride, by degrees, got the better of her sorrows; and starting from him, she cried out—'Deceitful 'and ungenerous man! think not that 'your base desires shall triumph over the 'weakness I have confessed for you!— 'No, I will never see you more; nor 'henceforward think of you but with 'horror and detestation!'

In speaking these words, she flew out of the arbour. Rage gave wings to her feet; yet Mutantius would certainly have overtaken her, if the sight of a man whom Beechly had employed to do some work in the garden had not made him turn back. He went to his lodgings much disconcerted at this accident; but the knowledge he had of Aristella's affection for him, kept him from totally despairing. He repaired to the arbour next morning, but no Aristella appeared; he went again, but had no better success. Resolved to see her, if possible, he made a visit at the house, and told Beechly, in a free manner, that he was come to take a second dinner with him; to which he replied with a compliment suitable to the occasion.

Mutantius was again disappointed: Aristella, hearing he was there, sent word to her brother that she had a violent tooth-ache, and desired he would excuse her from coming down. This drove the lover almost to distraction: he went home, wrote to her, and made his footman go, as of his own accord, to chat with the servants, and loiter about the house till he should see Aristella, and deliver the letter to her. The fellow found means to execute his commission; Aristella took the letter on his presenting it to her, and went up into her chamber; but, after reflecting a little, would not trust her own heart so far as to read this dangerous epistle: she therefore put it under a cover; and, having sealed and directed it, came down, and gave it to the man, saying—'There's my answer 'to your master's letter.'

Never had the vanity of Mutantius met with so severe a shock; yet could he not forbear revering the virtue he attempted to destroy. If before he loved, he now adored her; and the more he considered her perfections, the more he found her worthy to be his wife; yet, when he thought of marriage, the idea of that state was irksome to him. He knew that at present he was the idol of the fair, but should cease to be so if once he became a husband. He could not bear to lose his darling admiration, yet was equally unable to bear life without the enjoyment of Aristella. After some debate within himself, his passion, however, got the better of his vanity, and he resolved to marry Aristella; but which way to let her know he meant to do so, seemed as great a difficulty as any he had passed through in attempting to seduce her: he was convinced she would neither see him, nor receive a letter from him; yet, in spite of all this, Love, fertile in contrivances, put a stratagem into his head which had the desired effect: it was this—

Beechly's new-born son had not been yet baptized, on account of the mother's having been more than ordinarily indisposed during her lying-in. He offered to be one of the sponsors, which the other gladly accepted. Aristella could not now avoid his presence; but behaved with so much reserve, scarce ever looking towards him, that a man less conscious of his own merit might have been abashed. After some time, when most of the company were engaged in conversation, he found an opportunity to say to her—'Madam, I beseech you will 'forgive the rash proposal I presumed 'to make you; be assured I have heartily repented of it, and have now no 'designs upon you but what are truly 'honourable.' To which she replied—'Sir, I shall never believe a man means 'me well, who has once thought so 'poorly of me.'—'I only beg,' returned

fumed he, 'the liberty of entertaining 'you once more in private; and if what 'I have then to say does not merit your 'pardon and favour, I shall leave Can-'terbury, and perhaps the world, for 'ever.' He could add no more at that time, Beechly calling him to pledge him in a bumper to the young Christian; but, before they parted, he found means to enforce what he had last said with so moving an air, that she consented to see him the next morning.

The consequence of this interview was a full forgiveness of what was past on the side of Aristella; and on that of Mutantius, a solemn vow of making her his wife the moment she consented to be so: but added, that there were some circumstances in his affairs which required their marriage should be kept secret for a time. To this last article she made no direct answer, at present; but the next day, when they met again by appointment, suffered herself to be overcome by his persuasions, and promised that every thing should be as he would have it. It was at last agreed upon between them, that he should return to London in a few days; and that she should follow, as soon as her sister's recovery permitted to take her leave with decency.

Both these lovers were now in a state of perfect contentment, and each of them observed their promise with the utmost punctuality: but what afterwards befel them, must be the subject of another chapter.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINS ONLY A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME NARRATIVE, BEGUN IN THE FOREGOING CHAPTER, AND WILL NOT BE CONCLUDED IN THIS.

MUTANTIUS being apprized, by a letter from Aristella, of the day she should come to town, went in his own coach to Greenwich to meet her, and conducted her to a very handsome lodging, in one of the best streets near Bloomsbury Square, where he had also provided servants to attend her. She was at first a little scrupulous of putting herself under his protection, till the sacred ceremony had been performed. He perceived the apprehensions she was under, and immediately relieved them, by renewing his protestations that the next morning should make his person as inviolably hers as his heart had been from the first moment he beheld her; and, at the same time, shewed her a ring and licence, which he had already prepared for that purpose. He supped with her that evening; but when it was over, very respectfully retired, to leave her to that repose he judged necessary after the fatigue of the journey.

I come now to that part of the story which I had an opportunity of being both an eye and ear-witness of. I was acquainted with the gentlewoman of the house where Aristella was placed, and happened to call there on some business the very next morning after that young lady had been brought thither. My friend told me, among other discourse, that she had lett her lodgings at a very high rent; but was apprehensive the person they were for was no better than a kept woman. On my asking what ground she had for such a suspicion, she replied, that she had lett them to a gentleman of fortune, called Mutantius, for the use of a lady whom he brought to take possession of them the night before; and that he had hired servants to wait upon her, who knew as little of the lady as she did. She farther added, that the lady was young and pretty; and that she could not help thinking it a little odd such a one should be under the care of so gay a spark as Mutantius.

As I was perfectly acquainted with the character of Mutantius, I was of opinion she was in the right; and advised her to say nothing till she saw farther into the matter, and not lose so beneficial a lodger on a bare conjecture. She approved of what I said, and I took my leave, but not to go home. What she had told me filled me with a curiosity to discover something more of this affair; so went no farther than the first blind alley I found, where I put on my Invisible Belt, and returned again just as Mutantius knocked at the door. I entered with him, and followed him up stairs. The sight of Aristella convinced me that the good woman had not been mistaken in the description she gave me of her. The lovers ran into each other's arms; and Mutantius, looking on her with the greatest tenderness, spoke thus—

Mutantius. Now, my dearest Aristella,

ſtella, I am come to put a final end to all your doubts either of my love or honour.

Ariſtella. I am pleaſed to think that the perfect confidence I have ſhewn in both gives me ſome ſort of claim to the proof you are now about to give of them, ſince I muſt confeſs myſelf in every other reſpect ſo unworthy of you.

Mutantius. You are worthy of every thing. But, my dear, you forget that there is another teſtimony that I expect from you of the regard you have for me.

Ariſtella. Name it; that my ready compliance may convince you how happy I think myſelf in every opportunity of obliging you.

Mutantius. It is that you will be content that for ſome time our marriage may be kept a ſecret.

Ariſtella. You know I have promiſed it.

Mutantius. Yes, in general terms: but you have ſiſters, who are very dear to you; and though I doubt not of their diſcretion, I cannot think a ſecret ſafe when truſted in ſo many hands. Will then your love for me enable you to endure their reproaches for your ſuppoſed diſhonour, rather than reveal what is inconvenient for me to be made known?

Ariſtella. The trial is a little ſevere, but will not laſt for ever.

Mutantius. No, my dear. A time will come when your innocence ſhall be fully cleared, and, like the ſun, ſhine brighter after this ſhort eclipſe; till then, may I depend that the name of wife and huſband ſhall be known only between ourſelves?

Ariſtella. You may.

Mutantius. Swear it, then.

Ariſtella. By all that's ſacred.

Mutantius. Hold, my dear: I would have you firſt underſtand the full extent of the vow you are about to make. You ſwear that no imaginary provocation on my ſide, nor no unjuſt contempt nor ill treatment you may meet with from the world, ſhall ever extort from you a confeſſion that you are my wife, till I myſelf ſhall publickly acknowledge you to be ſo.

Ariſtella. All this I ſolemnly ſwear; and invoke Heaven to bleſs me as I ſhall religiouſly obſerve it.

Mutantius. Charming generous creature!—And, in return, to prevent all future apprehenſions in prejudice of my faith or conſtancy from riſing in your breaſt, if it were poſſible for me to take a baſe advantage of the obligation I have laid you under, and make my addreſſes to another woman on the ſcore of marriage, I here releaſe you from your vow, and leave you at liberty to declare yourſelf my wife, aſſert your prior right, and proclaim me for a villain.

Ariſtella. Heaven forbid it ſhould ever come to that!

Mutantius. No, my Ariſtella; there is no danger. I have already rejected greater offers than ever will be made to me again. To deal ſincerely with you, there has been always in my nature an extreme repugnancy to the name of marriage; the name of huſband was irkſome to me: no woman but yourſelf had ever charms to reconcile me to it; but your beauty, ſweetneſs, and unaffected modeſty, have now informed my ſoul, and, by degrees, will make me as proud of Hymen's fetters as I ſhould once have been aſhamed of them.

Ariſtella. It ſhall be my whole ſtudy to make them eaſy to you.

Mutantius. I know it will. But, come, my love, a coach waits to carry us to church; that ſolemn ſcene which fixes the everlaſting happineſs or miſery of all who approach it in the manner we do.

On concluding theſe words, he took her by the hand, and led her down ſtairs. I was cloſe behind them when they went into the coach, which was ordered to drive to Clerkenwell. I preſently ſuppoſed he made choice of this place as there was the leaſt danger of his being ſeen by any one who knew him. I followed on foot; but came time enough to ſee Mutantius reſign that liberty he had once ſet ſo high a value on as to reſolve never to part with. The ceremony was performed by the curate of the pariſh; and the clerk officiated as father, to give away the bride. After all was over, Mutantius deſired their marriage might be regiſtered, and a certificate of it given to Ariſtella; both which were accordingly done.

I now left the new-wedded pair to diſpoſe of themſelves as they thought fit, and returned to my apartment, in order to ruminate at leiſure on an adventure which ſeemed to me to have in it many inconſiſtencies. But the more I thought on this adventure, the more I was confounded; and the reſult of all my meditations

tations was, that it must be left to time to unravel the mystery: I kept, however, a watchful eye on the behaviour of Mutantius, but was little the wiser for the pains I took, as I found he only lived in the same gay and gallant manner he he had always done in respect to the ladies.

But now, methinks, I hear the reader cry out with some impatience—'How 'did Aristelia behave all this time? 'How could she, the wife of this incon-'stant man, support the share that others 'had in his affections?' It is, indeed, impossible for me to say in what manner she would have resented so provoking a cricumstance, if known to her; but she lived too retired for it to reach her ears: she had, however, other troubles more than sufficient for human fortitude to sustain; but of what nature, must be left to the next chapter to explain.

CHAP. X.

THE CATASTROPHE OF THIS ADVENTURE CANNOT FAIL OF EXCITING COMPASSION IN THE BREASTS OF MY FAIR READERS, AND ALSO AFFORD MATTER OF SPECULATION TO THE OTHER SEX.

THE pursuit of other adventures, which shall be inserted in their proper places before the conclusion of this work, hindered me for a long time from going to see in what manner Aristella was treated by Mutantius; but at length, some uneasy reflections on her account raised an impatience in me to know the certainty of her present state. Accordingly I went one day to the house where she was lodged; but, to my great surprize, found she had made but a short stay there, and had been removed a considerable time before my coming. On my asking some questions of my friend concerning the reason of it, the good woman answered me in these or the like terms—'The affair was just as I ex-'pected,' said she. 'I pity the poor 'young gentlewoman, indeed; she has 'not the looks of such a one; but I 'suppose she has been decoyed by abun-'dance of fair promises: I wonder, 'however, that Mutantius, knowing the 'character of my house, and that I always 'had people of the best fashion lodge 'with me, should offer to bring a kept-'mistress under my roof; but I was very 'free with him, and told him my mind 'plainly on the occasion.'

'And pray what answer did he make,' cried I, with some impatience, 'when 'you called her a kept-mistress?'—'Very little to the purpose, truly,' resumed she; 'he only said that she was a 'gentlewoman, and a friend of his, and, 'as such, expected that I should treat 'her civilly. I told him, it was not in 'my nature to treat any body uncivilly, 'but that I would encourage no such 'doings; and therefore desired he would 'provide another lodging for her. On 'this, he flew into a passion, told me I 'was an ignorant, foolish woman, and 'the like; but I did not regard his 'bouncing; and, as he found I was re-'solute, took his Madam away in a few 'days afterwards.'

The manner in which this woman spoke, made me extremely commiserate the condition of Aristella, who, though a lawful wife, was obliged, through the caprice of Mutantius, and the vow she had taken, to endure all the contumely due to a prostitute. I would have given almost any thing but the secret of my Invisible Belt and Tablets to have cleared Aristella's innocence in the fullest manner to this gentlewoman; but as there was no doing one without the other, I was compelled to content myself with getting out of her directions to the place where this much injured lady was removed, resolving to take the first opportunity to see what atonement the behaviour of Mutantius made to her in private, for the injustice he did her reputation in publick.

I was so lucky as to find them together the first day I went; but the scene I was witness of, instead of diminishing, very much added to the concern I had carried with me. Aristella was sitting very melancholy in one corner of the room, Mutantius in another, with all the marks of discontent and ill-humour in his countenance. By what followed, it appears that she had been speaking somewhat to him in relation to the discovery of their marriage. I doubt not, by what I saw of her behaviour, both before and afterwards, that she expressed herself in very gentle terms on the occasion; but the bare mention of such a thing to a man of his present way of thinking, was of itself a sufficient offence. I have al-

ready described the posture I found him in; but, just as I entered the room, he replied to what she had said, and that reply drew on a conversation which let me into the whole of both their sentiments.

Mutantius. I am sorry to find you have so little regard for me, and indeed so little prudence, as, whenever I am with you, to fall eternally upon a subject which you know is disagreeable to me.

Aristella. If you loved me half so well as you once pretended, it would not be so disagreeable; and you would, at least, acquaint me with the reasons which oblige me to live in the manner I do.

Mutantius. Perhaps it is not proper for me to reveal them.

Aristella. Oh, Mutantius! I know not what to think of my condition. Why did you marry me?

Mutantius. Because I then liked you better than any other woman, and if I do not still continue to do so, it is your own fault. I hate to be teazed; besides, the conditions of our marriage were that it should be kept a secret.

Aristella. Yes, for a time.

Mutantius. That time will not be shortened by your impatience.

Aristella. It may, for if it lasts much longer my heart must infallibly break.

Mutantius. Pish! women's hearts are not made of such brittle stuff; the head is in more danger, when swelled with pride and vanity.

Aristella. Indeed, Sir, I think it would at least become you to be a little more serious on the occasion.

Mutantius. With all my heart, Madam, as serious as you please; for 'faith I am not in a humour to be merry. Seriously, then, you seem to me to be one of the most ungrateful and most unreasonable women under the sun. Have I not taken you from a dependance on your sisters? Have you not now good lodgings, servants to wait on you, and an allowance sufficient to support you in a fashion beyond what you could ever have expected? yet all this is nothing in your account.

Aristella. Nothing, when balanced against a life of infamy: the very servants you upbraid me with, despise me while they serve me; the people of the house treat me but with an enforced civility; I pass my days as one who was an alien to the world, and had no business in it; never partake the joys of social conversation, never visit, nor am visited, and scarce dare venture to breathe the open air, lest I should be seen by any who have known me, especially by my sisters, who, mean as you think of them, know how to set a just value upon reputation, and to scorn all riches without it.

Mutantius. A very fine catalogue of complaints, truly! Have you any more?

Aristella. Yes, one thing more, which, with what indifference soever you may now regard me, ought not, methinks, to escape your consideration. You know I am far advanced in my pregnancy; perhaps, too, of a son; and can you support the thoughts, that an infant, born the lawful heir of your estate and name, shall be saluted, on his first seeing the light, with the odious title of bastard?

Mutantius. What will he be the worse, unless you expect to have so wise a child as to know what is said of him as soon as he comes into the world?

Aristella. Oh, Mutantius! Mutantius! this is cruel dealing.

She said no more, but wept bitterly. Mutantius, who, it must be owned, has some good-nature, seemed much moved at seeing her thus; and having looked on her some moments with a great deal of tenderness, bid her come to him: she obeyed, but advanced with the most sorrowful and dejected air; he pulled her to him, made her sit upon his knee, and kissing away the tears, he spoke thus—

Mutantius. Come, my poor Aristella, do not be so foolish; you have no cause for weeping; you know yourself virtuous, and I know you are so, and have no need to be afflicted at the mistaken opinion others may have of you, especially as it is not to last always.

Aristella. If I were certain when this event would happen, even though it were much longer than I hope it will, I should wait with patience.

Mutantius. You must depend for that upon my love and honour; it is not in my power to assign the day and hour. To deal sincerely with you, I have been a railer at marriage, have refused offers of that nature as much above my expectations as I was above yours, and I cannot all at once submit to be pointed at for a husband, and hear people laugh and cry out, that I had thrown myself away: but of this, my dear, you may assure yourself, that I will endeavour to get rid of these scruples as soon as possible. In the mean time, I will give you as much of my company as can be

spared

ſpared from buſineſs and other attachments which are not to be diſpenſed with. I came on purpoſe to devote this whole day to you, drive me not from you by your diſcontent; kiſs me, and give me your promiſe that you will be entirely eaſy.

She complied readily with the firſt part of this injunction, and ſaid ſhe would do her beſt to perform the other. But by what I had now ſeen of the behaviour and diſpoſition of Mutantius, I found reaſon to believe it would be yet a great while before he would bring himſelf to make a declaration of his marriage; ſo reſolved not to take the trouble of any farther inquiſitions, but wait till common fame ſhould give me intelligence of it. This event, however, happened much ſooner than I expected; but was brought about by an accident which excited the extremeſt pity inſtead of congratulations. The unfortunate Ariſtella was not born to enjoy a happineſs ſhe ſo ardently had wiſhed for, and ſo long been made to hope; death alone had the power to give what life in vain had waited for; and the ſame breath which told me Mutantius had acknowledged her for his wife, informed me alſo that ſhe was no more.

Ariſtella, on her leaving the country, was charged with letters and ſome little preſents from Mrs. Beechly to her two ſiſters in London; but being hindered from executing this commiſſion in perſon, by the obligation Mutantius had laid her under, ſhe ſent what was entruſted to her care by a porter, accompanied with a little billet from herſelf; in which ſhe told them, that an affair of the utmoſt conſequence kept her at preſent from ſeeing them, but that ſhe hoped to do ſo in a ſhort time and would then acquaint them with the reaſons for having abſented herſelf, and begged they would entertain no unfavourable thoughts of her conduct in this point.

As the was circumſtanced, it was not in her power to have acted otherwiſe: yet what ſatisfaction could ſuch a letter give the two ſiſters? for a girl to baniſh herſelf from her kindred, without acquainting them with the motive, or the place to which ſhe was retired, had a right to raiſe in them conjectures of the worſt ſort. They were diſtracted at the thoughts of her ſuppoſed ruin, and ſpared no pains to find her out, in order to bring her home, and ſnatch her from the ſhame they imagined ſhe was involved in. Fruitleſs was their ſearch for a long time; but chance, at length, diſcovered not only where ſhe lived, but alſo that ſhe was ſupported by a gentleman, and looked upon as a kept miſtreſs. Quite enraged, they went to the houſe where ſhe was lodged, and the door happening to be open, flew up ſtairs without any ceremony, and burſt in upon her. The ſight of her—for her pregnancy was viſible—added to the paſſions they were before enflamed with: they reproached, they reviled her in the moſt bitter terms; while poor Ariſtella, bound by the fatal oath ſhe had taken, could ſay nothing in defence of her innocence, but what ſerved to convince them more fully of her guilt. After having loaded her with opprobrious names, they left her with the ſame precipitation they had come, vowing never more to ſee or think of her as a ſiſter.

Impoſſible it is for any one to conceive what the ſoul of Ariſtella ſuffered in this ſhocking ſtroke: conſcious of innocence, yet labouring under all the appearance of guilt; ſcandalized, abuſed by thoſe to whom ſhe had been ſo dear, yet incapable either of defending her wronged virtue, or of blaming the ſeverity ſhe was treated with for her ſuppoſed fall; every paſſion that can agitate the human heart, at once aſſailed, and overwhelmed her with a variety of anguiſh; the force or which had ſuch an effect upon her, as to cauſe an abortion that ſame night, and alſo to throw her into convulſions, which in a few hours rendered her life deſpaired of by all about her. In her intervals, between thoſe fits which deprived her of all ſenſe and motion, ſhe cried out for Mutantius, aſked where he was, and ſaid ſhe could not die without ſeeing him. Meſſengers were immediately diſpatched to him; he came, ſeemed greatly affected at the condition he found her in, but was much more ſo, when he was informed what it was had thrown her into it. She was inſenſible on his entrance, but recovering ſoon after, and ſeeing him ſo near her, catched hold of his hand, and with agonies inexpreſſible, ſaid to him—'Oh, Mutantius! you will 'now be rid of a tie you have been 'aſhamed to own.'—'No, by Heaven!' cried he: 'Live, live, Ariſtella, and I 'will declare to all the world that you 'are my wife, my lawful married wife.'

Whether it were this ſudden ruſh of joy, on hearing him ſpeak theſe words,

that was too powerful for her weakneſs to ſuſtain, or that the lamp of life was waſted by the agonies ſhe had before endured, is altogether uncertain; but ſhe expired that moment, yielding up her laſt breath on the boſom of her too late repenting huſband. Love, pity, and remorſe, now engroſſed all his faculties; he kept his promiſe, acknowledged her for his wife, had her intombed with great funeral pomp in his own family vault, and paid all imaginable honours to her memory. Whether he will ever relapſe into his former vanities, time alone muſt ſhew; but at preſent, this once gay, thoughtleſs rover, either is, or affects to be, loſt to the joys he lately was ſo fond of; behaves with the utmoſt indifference towards the fair ſex; ſeldom goes to any publick place; ſees but little company at home; and ſeems to be in every thing the very reverſe of what he was.

As to the ſiſters of the unfortunate Ariſtella, they were ſeized with the moſt deep affliction, when they came to know the ſad effects their raſh reſentment had occaſioned—which may ſerve as a warning to all perſons not to be over haſty in cenſuring actions, the true meaning of which they cannot immediately comprehend.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

IS DEDICATED ENTIRELY TO THE LADIES, AS IT RELATES AN ADVENTURE WHICH NEARLY CONCERNS THEM TO TAKE NOTICE OF.

AMONG all the numerous modes which the wantonneſs of luxury has of late years introduced into this kingdom for deſtroying of time, I know of none more fatal to the virtue and reputation of the female ſex than maſquerades; I mean, as that amuſement is at preſent conducted. Indeed, when a ſelect company of ladies and gentlemen agree among themſelves, or are invited by ſome perſon of condition, to divert each other in ſuch diſguiſes as their ſeveral fancies ſhall make choice of, the caſe is widely different; for there, after paſſing a few hours in muſick, dancing, and pleaſant raillery, according to the characters they aſſume, the maſks are all thrown aſide, and every one appears as he is; ſo that none will venture to talk or act beneath a vizard, in ſuch a manner as, when he ſtands revealed, will either reflect ſhame on himſelf, or give offence to thoſe he has been entertaining. Maſquerades, thus managed, I cannot but allow to be not only innocent but laudable amuſements, as they ſerve to whet the wit and exhilarate the mind.

But here, ſorry am I to ſay it, the maſquerade houſes may with propriety enough be called ſhops, where opportunities for immorality, prophaneneſs, obſcenity, and almoſt every kind of vice, are retailed to any one who will become a cuſtomer; and at the low rate of ſeven and twenty ſhillings, the moſt abandoned courtezan, the moſt profligate rake, or common ſharper, purchaſes the privilege of mingling with the firſt peers and peereſſes of the realm, and not ſeldom affronts both modeſty and greatneſs with impunity. I perceive, to my great ſatisfaction, there are ſome ladies who, touched with a juſt ſenſe of what is owing to their dignity, are determined not to expoſe themſelves any more in a place where, if no worſe enſues, the moſt licentious freedoms of ſpeech, at leaſt, are often offered to the chaſteſt ears; and I am not without hope, that the influence of their example will prevail on many others to do the ſame. For the benefit, however, of the unwary, and thoſe who, by their ſmall acquaintance in town, are ignorant of the cuſtoms of theſe dangerous amuſements, it will not be amiſs to relate

relate an adventure which I was witneſs of, and may ſerve as a warning to all who are truly innocent, and deſire to remain ſo.

Alexis and Matilda were the ſon and daughter of two gentlemen who lived near Newcaſtle. They had loved each other even before either well knew what was meant by the paſſion; and, as their underſtanding ripened, their inclinations increaſed. Hope, for ſome time, gilded the proſpect of their mutual wiſhes; but, when they leaſt expected, a ſtop was put to the conſummation by an unfortunate diſagreement between their parents. Alexis was forbid to ſee Matilda, and Matilda ever to think on Alexis: but theſe commands had little authority over hearts ſo fondly enamoured as theirs; they formed the moſt romantick contrivances to keep alive the flame with which each had inſpired the other; ſome of which ſucceeded ſo well, as to enable them to continue an intercourſe by letters, and even to gain private interviews. It was the father of Alexis who of the two had been moſt refractory; and he dying a ſmall time after, the young gentleman found means to reconcile matters ſo effectually with the parents of Matilda, that they at length conſented to give her to him, and compleated the happineſs of the equally loving and beloved pair.

Matilda, whoſe every care, hope, and joy, had all been centered in her dear Alexis, had nothing now to wiſh beyond what ſhe was in poſſeſſion of; and Alexis thought himſelf ſo bleſt, that he even defied the power of Fortune to give him any cauſe of diſquiet. Fatal ſecurity! How little dependance for the future is there on the preſent good! They had not long enjoyed the ſweets of this ſo-much-deſired union, before Matilda, who had never been in London, expreſſed a curioſity to ſee it. Alexis, proud to embrace every opportunity of giving her pleaſure, immediately took the hint, and told her he was ready to conduct her there as ſoon as ſhe pleaſed. Accordingly they ſet out, and arrived in London about September. Alexis took ready-furniſhed lodgings, in a handſome houſe near St. James's, for ſix months; in which time he thought he ſhould be able to ſhew Matilda every thing worth her ſeeing in town.

Alexis had received his firſt precepts at Weſtminſter School; and having no relations in London, his father requeſted me, by letters, to call ſometimes at the houſe where he boarded, and have an eye over his behaviour. I did ſo; and the advice I gave him being delivered not in a magiſterial but friendly manner, the lad conceived a very great affection for me from that time, and has preſerved it ever ſince. He made me the compliment of a firſt viſit on his coming to town, told me how happy he was, and begged I would be no ſtranger to the fair perſon who had made him ſo. I accepted the invitation, and went the next day. On his preſenting Matilda to me, I was ſtruck with admiration; for, beſides every thing that could conſtitute a perfect beauty, there was a ſweet ſimplicity, and a chearful, unaffected innocence, which ſhone through the whole, and brightened every grace.

As the ſole excitement Matilda had to take a journey to London was to gratify her curioſity with the ſight of it, there was no eminent ſtructure, or place of note, to which ſhe was not conducted by her Alexis. A new ſcene of diverſions opened as the winter ſeaſon came on; plays, operas, and maſquerades, now began to attract attention: the two firſt of theſe amuſements Matilda was not altogether a ſtranger to, having often ſeen ſomewhat like them acted by ſtrolling companies in the country, but ſhe had not the leaſt notion of maſquerades; and the little account Alexis was able to give her making her more impatient to know what ſort of entertainment they afforded, it may be eaſily ſuppoſed that ſo indulgent an huſband would not ſuffer her to continue long in ſuſpence; it may be, too, that he had ſome curioſity of his own to gratify in this point, having, it ſeems, never been at a maſquerade himſelf.

Tickets accordingly were purchaſed, and habits hired. I happened to make a morning viſit the day they were to go, and found Matilda buſy in ornamenting a little hat and crook. The moment I entered the room, ſhe told me, with the greateſt pleaſure in her countenance, that ſhe was to be at the maſquerade that night, and was to aſſume the character of a ſhepherdeſs. I replied, ſhe could not take upon her one more ſuitable to her youth and innocence.

I ſaid nothing to them of my deſign; but, when evening came, I equipped myſelf

myſelf with a domino, and haſted to that Babel of hurry and confuſion; where it was no difficult matter to diſcover the perſons I ſought after, as I knew the dreſſes they were in. I ſoon diſtinguiſhed the ſhepherdeſs, and the huſband by the blue domino I had ſeen lying on a table in his dining-room, and perceived there were many eyes upon Matilda; for though her face was concealed, her ſhape and air had ſomewhat in them ſufficiently attractive. But there was one who, above all the reſt, ſeemed particularly attentive to her motions: he was in the habit of a huntſman; a character which I afterwards had reaſon to ſay to myſelf ſuited very well with the intentions he had in his head that night. Which way ſoever Matilda turned, he took care not to loſe ſight of her; but, as ſhe kept cloſe to Alexis, neither he nor any one elſe had an opportunity of ſpeaking to her. I hovered as near them as I could without being taken notice of; and it gave me a good deal of diverſion, to ſee the ſurprize this innocent country lady teſtified at hearing the freedoms with which ſome people, who ſeemed to be perfect ſtrangers, accoſted each other.

A gentleman croſſing the room with his maſk in his hand, was known to Alexis; who, on ſight of him, cried out to Matilda—'Look yonder, my 'dear! there is Mr. Freeman! I never 'heard of his being in town. I will 'juſt ſtep and tell him where we lodge: 'do you ſit here till I come back.' He then ſeated her on a bench, and went haſtily after his friend, who had paſſed into another room. I now doubted not but the huntſman would ſnatch his opportunity of entertaining Matilda; but I loſt ſight of him in an inſtant; he vaniſhed, as it were, from the place, and I ſaw him no more. The fair ſhepherdeſs, however, was not to remain neglected. I found ſeveral advancing towards her; one of whom was the moſt groteſque, as well as diſagreeable figure, I ever beheld: his ſtature was far from what could be called tall, but the circumference of his carcaſe exceeded that of any three men in the whole aſſembly; his legs looked like the pillars of a church-porch, and when he moved were at ſuch a diſtance from each other, that a boar of a moderate ſize might eaſily paſs between them without being incommoded. He had on the habit of a Turkiſh baſhaw; which was the worſt, indeed, he could have choſe; his huge ears, diſcovered by the ſhortneſs of his turban, hung upon his ſhoulders, as did the wallets under his chin upon his breaſt: in a word, he could have no deformity that the dreſs he was in did not ſhew to advantage.

This enormous creature had no ſooner reached the place where Matilda ſat, than he threw himſelf down by her on the bench, and accoſted her with language which I ſhould never forgive myſelf, nor expect to be forgiven by my reader, to repeat; but I was glad to find, by the whiſpers of ſome people behind me, that, inſtead of a gentleman, as I at firſt took him for, he was no other than a bully at a noted brothel in Covent Garden, and was known about town by the name of Lumper Hammock. I cannot pretend to ſay whether this fellow was encouraged by any other perſon to behave to Matilda in the manner he did merely to put her ſpirits into a hurry, or whether he was inſtigated to it only by his own impudence and brutality: but, whatever it might be, the ſituation of that poor lady was greatly to be pitied; ſhe moved by little and little as far from him as the bench would give her leave; but he ſtill followed, and would needs keep cloſe to her, and perſecute her with his ribaldry. Sometimes ſhe got up, and looked round to ſee for her huſband; then ſat down again, not daring to leave the place for fear of miſſing him; but all the time ſhewed tokens of the utmoſt agitation of mind.

At length the blue domino appeared; on which ſhe ſtarted from her ſeat, and running to him, cried—'Oh, my dear, 'I am glad you are come!' He only replied, in a low voice—'Aye, aye, let 'us be gone!' and, taking her by the hand, led her haſtily away. I pleaſed myſelf with the thoughts of having ſeen Matilda ſafe under the protection of her huſband, and was equally ſo that he had diſcovered little approbation of the maſquerade, by his leaving it at a time when the diverſion was at it's height, and more company coming in than going out.

But the ſatisfaction I enjoyed in both theſe points, vaniſhed in a moment. Alexis returned; his maſk was now off, and he paſſed directly to the place where he had left Matilda; then ſtarted back. Confuſion and ſurprize overſpread his face;

face; he threw his eyes wildly round the room, then ran through every part of it; and, without considering how much he expoſed himſelf to the ridicule of that giggling aſſembly, aſked firſt of one, and then of another, if they had ſeen a ſhepherdeſs in green and ſilver, and if they knew what was become of her. This ſtruck me with infinite concern, as it made me know Matilda had been deceived by the ſight of the blue domino; and, in ſpite of my unwillingneſs to let him ſee I had come to a place where I had refuſed to accompany him, was juſt ſtepping forward to inform him of what had happened, when a lady, hearing his enquiries, ſaid—'Sir, the lady I ſaw 'with you, in the dreſs you mention, 'went away a little while ago with a 'gentleman in a blue domino, much 'the ſame as your own.' On which he cried out—'Oh Heavens! what curſed 'miſtake is this!'

In uttering this exclamation, he flew out of the room like lightning, without ſtaying to thank the lady for her intelligence. I followed as faſt as I could, and found him at the door of the houſe, encompaſſed with hackney-coachmen, chairmen, and link-boys; among whom he was vainly endeavouring to get ſome account of his loſt ſhepherdeſs. One of them, it ſeems, had ſaid he ſaw a lady, in the habit he deſcribed, go into a coach with a gentleman, but could tell nothing either of the figure of the coach, or where it was ordered to drive. Finding no information could be gained in the place where he was, he withdrew from the crowd, as I ſuppoſe to conſider what method he ſhould purſue; for he continued in a fixed poſture for two or three minutes, leaning againſt ſome rails before an adjacent houſe. My heart bled for him; and if I had been capable of offering him either advice or conſolation, would not have kept at the diſtance I did: but the accident that had happened was without a remedy; and I had often obſerved, that to preach up moderation in the firſt guſts of paſſion ſerve but to inflame it more.

I thought there were no meaſures he could take that night; yet imagining he had ſomething in his head, was deſirous of ſeeing what event his cogitations would produce: I therefore laid hold of the opportunity I now had of ſtepping behind the cover of a hackney-coach in waiting, and girded on my Belt of Inviſibility, which I always carried in my pocket, in caſe any thing ſhould fall in my way to give me occaſion to make uſe of it. The influence of my valuable gift had but juſt taken effect, by being warm upon my body, when Alexis rouzed himſelf out of his reverie, and walked very faſt up the ſtreet. I kept pace with him till he came to the houſe where he lodged. The door being opened by his own footman, who ſat up for him—'Is my wife come home?' cried he. The fellow anſwered in the negative; and ſeeming ſomewhat ſurprized at this queſtion, he threw himſelf into the parlour, ſaying to himſelf—'How mad 'a hope did I entertain that ſhe might 'have found ſome means to eſcape the 'hands of her raviſher, and been here 'before me!—No, no, 'tis impoſſible! 'the villain doubtleſs will ſecure his 'prey. Curſed, curſed maſquerade! 'invented by the fiends for the de-'ſtruction of virtue!'

While he was thus ſpeaking, he tore off his domino with agonies not to be expreſſed, and ſtamped it under his feet; then turning to his ſervant, went on thus—

Alexis. William, your miſtreſs is run away with; ſtolen from me by ſome villain in a domino like my own: ſhe is loſt for ever unleſs immediately recovered. Fly, this minute, to every tavern and bagnio you can think of; deſcribe her habit; enquire if ſuch a one, with a perſon in a blue domino, entered there. Be gone this inſtant! while I run to a juſtice of peace, and get a warrant to ſearch in all ſuſpected places.

William. What part of the town, Sir, do you think it moſt likely I ſhall hear of her?

Alexis. Alas! I am as ignorant of that as you: but all parts muſt be ſearched. Fly, then, good William!—and, do you hear, aſk every hackney-coachman you meet with if he ſet any ſuch perſons down, and where? Away, I ſay!—ſtay not to conſider!—a moment may confirm her ruin and my diſhonour!

The fellow obeyed without making any farther reply; but I perceived, by his countenance, was not very well contented with the errand he was ſent upon: and Alexis went out of the houſe at the ſame time he did, in order to have recourſe to a magiſtrate in this exigence, as he ſaid he would. I had no inclination to follow either maſter or man on an expedi-

tion

tion which promiſed ſo little ſucceſs; therefore made all the haſte I could to my own apartment, very much fatigued in body, yet much more ſo in mind, at the unfortunate miſtake poor Matilda had fallen into, and which I had all the reaſon in the world to fear would be attended with the moſt dreadful conſequences.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINS THE CONCLUSION OF A NARRATIVE, WHICH I AM CERTAIN THERE IS ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CANNOT READ WITHOUT BEING FILLED WITH THE MOST POIGNANT REMORSE, UNLESS HE IS AS DEAD TO ALL SENSE OF HUMANITY AS OF HONOUR.

MY impatience to know if Matilda was yet come home, or if the reſearches of Alexis had gained him any information concerning her, made me reſolve to go to his lodgings in the morning; but whether I ſhould make this viſit in my Viſible or Inviſible capacity, I was for ſome time at a loſs: at laſt, it ſeemed moſt eligible to appear in *propria perſona*, as if I came only to aſk ſome queſtions concerning the maſquerade, and how they approved of that diverſion, as it was the firſt time they partook of it; and alſo to take no notice of my being apprized of any thing that had happened there, unleſs he related it to me himſelf, which I did not much doubt of his doing. Accordingly I went; and, upon my entering into the dining-room, Alexis ran to me, and began the recital of his misfortune in this pathetick exclamation—'Oh, my friend, I am undone and ruined for ever! The author, giver, and partaker, of all my happineſs, is loſt! torn from me by ſome laſcivious, ſome inhuman villain! and him whom yeſterday you beheld the moſt bleſt of men, you now ſee the moſt accurſed and moſt wretched of all created beings!'

He then proceeded to inform me, as well as the diſtraction of his thoughts would give him leave, of the method he had taken for the recovery of his loſt treaſure; how he had paſſed the whole night and that morning in ſearch of her, and that all his enquiries had been fruitleſs.

I then adviſed him to put an advertiſement in the papers, deſcribing the ſhape and ſtature of Matilda, with all the particulars of her dreſs, and offering a handſome reward to any one who ſhould give information of the place at which ſhe alighted out of a hackney-coach, in company with a gentleman in a blue domino, between the hours of twelve and one. 'This you may do,' ſaid I, 'without mentioning any name, except that of the perſon to whom ſuch intelligence may be brought; and it is very likely either the coachman who carried her, or ſome one who might be about the door where ſhe was ſet down, or even the ſervants of the houſe, will, for the ſake of the gratuity, make that diſcovery which all your perſonal enquiries might not be able to obtain.'

I had no ſooner ended, than a ſudden dawn of chearfulneſs gleamed upon his languid face; and, to ſhew how much he approved of the thought, took pen and paper, and immediately wrote in almoſt the ſame terms I had expreſſed it; ſpecifying, at the ſame time, a coffee-houſe where the reward ſhould be paid, on the requeſted intelligence being brought. After this, Nature, who will not be denied her rites, whatever vexations may intervene to rob her of them, ſpread a certain drowſineſs upon his eye-lids, which I perceiving, perſuaded him to favour; and, on my promiſing to come again the ſame evening, he lay down on the bed, and left me at liberty to purſue my inclinations.

As I had now no engagement upon my hands, and had not been at White's for a conſiderable time, it was now my full deſign to go thither, imagining it might not be improbable but I might hear ſomething of Matilda; but as I had ſome very good reaſons not to appear in that place, I ſtepped into the firſt nook I found in my way, and put on my Belt of Invisibility. I was but juſt equipped, and paſſing on to my intended route, when I ſaw a chair, with the curtains cloſe drawn, ſtop at a few paces before me. I ſhould have taken no notice of this, if one of the fellows had not lifted up the top, and told the perſon in it that he had forgot whether it were the Red or the Green Lamps. The

anſwer was given in a voice which I preſently knew to be Matilda's; and, if I had not ſo well remembered, as I did, the accents, I ſhould have ſuſpected it was no other than herſelf, by her ſaying —'The Two Green Lamps.'

On finding it was ſhe, the reader will eaſily believe I had more curioſity to ſee the interview between her and Alexis than any thing elſe I could have in my head. I followed the chair till it came to the houſe, and on the door being opened, ſlipped in with it. On her alighting, Mrs. Soberton, who was miſtreſs of the houſe, ran out of the parlour, and was beginning to teſtify her joy at her return, though mingled with ſome demonſtrations of ſurprize, to ſee her in the condition ſhe was, which, indeed, was deplorable enough; her head without any other covering than a handkerchief careleſsly tied over her diſhevelled hair, her garments torn, her eyes ſwelled with tears, every feature diſtorted, and all the tokens of diſtraction and deſpair about her. She made no anſwer to what the good gentlewoman ſaid; but, after throwing ſome money to the chairmen, ran haſtily up into the dining-room, where, flinging herſelf on a ſettee, ſhe cried out—'Where is Alexis!' To which Mrs. Soberton, who had followed as well as myſelf, replied—'Oh, Madam, 'you cannot imagine what trouble both 'he and all of us have had on your ac'count!'

I know not whether that unhappy lady would have declared to Mrs. Soberton any part of what had befallen her or not; for Alexis, who either had not fallen aſleep, or was eaſily awaked, heard his wife's voice, and came flying out of the chamber that inſtant. Mrs. Soberton, diſcreetly judging that they might not chuſe to have a third perſon witneſs of their diſcourſe, went directly down ſtairs; but the Inviſible remained, and his wonderful Tablets received the impreſſion of the following dialogue between them:

Matilda. Oh, Alexis, why did you leave me?

Alexis. Why did you leave the place where I deſired you to wait for my return?

Matilda. I ſtirred not from it but to follow you, as I then thought.

Alexis. Confuſion! How could you be ſo miſtaken?

Matilda. Alas, I had no apprehenſion of the deception put upon me! His habit was exactly like yours; his ſtature the ſame; he ſpoke in a low voice; but if he had not, my ſpirits were in too much agitation at the impudence of a fellow who had but juſt before accoſted me, to have diſtinguiſhed the difference.

Alexis. Oh, my torn heart! But ſay, Who is the villain that betrayed you! Where were you carried!

Matilda. Alas, the precautions he took have left me ignorant of both; and all I know is, that I am undone!

Alexis. Diſtraction!—Undone, and not know by whom! nor even in what place! all means for my revenge barred up! Yet, perhaps, I may be able to diſcover ſomething—Tell me in an inſtant all the particulars of the ſtory!

Matilda. I will, though every word will ſtab me to the ſoul, and inflict anew the ſhocks I have undergone.

Alexis. No preparations; be quick, and anſwer my demand at once.

Matilda. Have patience, then; for while you look ſo terrible I cannot ſpeak.

Alexis. You cannot think I would hurt you; ſpeak then, and break at once the heart of thy wretched huſband!

Matilda. Oh, which way ſhall I begin?—how end?

Alexis Keep me not on the rack!

Matilda. Soon as I ſaw the counterfeit Alexis approach, I roſe to meet him; and on his bidding me come, and ſtretching forth his hand, I gave him mine, glad to find myſelf conducted from that mingled crowd, which I had ſeen too much of to deſire to continue any longer with. We went into a coach, where I began to tell him how I had been affronted by an ugly huge man in a Turkiſh habit; but he made no anſwer either to that or any other idle prate I entertained him with, till the coach ſtopped, and he handed me into a houſe, the entry of which was full of men, who were running backwards and forwards with candles in their hands, and ſeemed very buſy. I aſked where we were going; he ſtill made no reply; but after a ſhort whiſper to one of the fellows, led me up ſtairs.

Alexis. 'Sdeath! why did you go? Then was your time to have cried out for reſcue!

Matilda. What, from my huſband! I could not as yet know him from any other than yourſelf. I was, indeed, a little ſurprized at this behaviour; but imagined

imagined it was owing to some little whim you had taken into your head, on purpose to laugh at my simplicity. Being warm with having my mask on so long, I plucked it off as soon as we got into the room, but he clapped it on again, a man being then just entering with a bottle and glasses in his hand, which having set down on a table, he immediately withdrew. My conductor then bolted the door, and running towards me, said—'Now, my angel, I may feast 'my eye with all that heaven of beauty, 'which, while beneath a cloud, attracted 'my admiration; and you behold the 'man who from this happy moment de-'votes himself entirely to your charms.' With these words, he took off both mine and his own vizard. I shrieked, and surely had fainted with the fright, if an equal proportion of rage had not kept up my spirits.

Alexis. What said he then?

Matilda. A thousand romantick lyes, such as I have read in plays and novels, which I answered only with revilings; till perceiving my just scorn had no effect upon him, I had recourse to tears and entreaties; told him I was a married woman, that I had a husband dearer to me than my soul, and by whom I was as much beloved, and conjured him not to detain me.

Alexis. Did not this move him?

Matilda. Oh no, not in the least, the audacious wretch but laughed at this remonstrance, said that I was a fool, and knew not the true interest of my sex, but that he would instruct me better, and make me happy, though against my will.

Alexis. Execrable dog! But go on.

Matilda. You may easily believe, that he who could speak such words, would also accompany them with actions of the same nature. I resisted all I could the indecent liberties he took, called heaven and earth to my assistance, but in vain; I was at last overpowered. In the midst of tears, reproaches, swoonings, he effected his brutal purpose, and made me the most miserable of women!

Alexis. Most miserable, indeed! After this, I suppose, he would have suffered you to depart?

Matilda. Can you think me vile enough to continue one moment in the presence of that detested monster, when I was at liberty to leave him? This, indeed, is cruel. Oh, Alexis! I hate myself for what I have been compelled to suffer; do not you hate me too?

Alexis. Oh, 'tis too much for man to bear! Yet one thing more, Matilda; describe, as near as possible, the features and complexion of this inhuman ravisher.

Matilda. Alas, the horror I was in from the first moment I found myself in the power of a stranger, hindered me from taking any great notice. All I can say is, that he had dark eyes, a clear and ruddy skin; and though his behaviour rendered him odious to me, with others, I believe, he may pass for handsome.

Alexis. Young, I suppose?

Matilda. About five or six and twenty, as far as I can judge.

Alexis. Had he the appearance of a man of rank and fortune?

Matilda. Every thing I saw about him, which properly belonged to himself, bespoke him such; but doubly disguised. Did you not take notice of an huntsman at the masquerade?

Alexis. Yes, and remember he always kept near us. Was he the ravisher?

Matilda. The same. He told me he had his eye upon me from the first moment I came in, and when he saw you left me, ran and procured a domino as like yours as he could get, in hopes I might be, as, alas! I really was, deceived by that fatal habit.

Alexis. 'Tis well; I may perhaps hunt him.

The eyes of Alexis seemed to flash fire while he uttered these words: after which he stood musing for some time; then turning to his wife, who still sat weeping in the same posture she had thrown herself into at her entrance, spoke thus to her—

Alexis. Rise, Matilda, retire to your chamber, and endeavour to compose yourself to rest.

Matilda. What, so early? 'Tis not yet six o'clock.

Alexis. No matter, your condition requires it; you have wak'd too long, therefore pray go.

Matilda. Will you come too?

Alexis. Do not expect me, I have much to think upon, and must be alone; there is a fermentation in my mind which must have time to settle; to-morrow I may be at more ease, I pray you then to give me liberty this night.

With this, she took a candle and withdrew; but with a look and gesture so truly pity-moving, that if a painter had been to draw the picture of Despair, he could not have copied from an original more striking.

He then called for Mrs. Soberton, told her his wife had been very much frighted, and was indisposed; so begged she would assist her in any thing she might stand in need of. She made no reply, but went out of the room, I suppose, to do what he requested of her. I was about to follow her, but seeing Alexis put on his wig, which he had plucked off when he went to lie down, thought he was going on some expedition which it might be worth my taking the pains to explore. To this end I slipped down stairs while he was taking up his sword and hat, got out of the house before him, divested myself of my Belt, became visible, and met him some few paces distant. I told him I was returning to his lodgings according to my promise, and affected some surprize at seeing him abroad: he seemed pleased that he had not missed me, and repeated in a few words the sum of what I have been relating; adding, that he now flattered himself with being able to trace out the person who had injured him, by the description Matilda had given of him; and then intreated I would be so good as to accompany him in the search he was about to make; to which request I readily consented.

I found his scheme was, to enquire among those people who let out dresses for the masquerade, if any account could be given of a gentleman who the night before had hired, first the habit of a huntsman, and afterwards a blue domino. The thing, indeed, seemed feasible enough in itself, though it did not answer expectation. We went to several shops without receiving the least information; and all we could learn was, that a gentleman, habited like a huntsman, had come in a very great hurry for a blue domino, which had not been returned till about half an hour before our coming; but the name or quality of the person who hired it, the woman protested she knew nothing of. Alexis then demanded, somewhat hastily, who it was had brought it back: she smiled both at this interrogatory, and the manner in which it was made; and replied, that she was talking to customers at that time in the shop; but if she had been less engaged, she should scarce have taken any notice—'For,' said she, 'provided we have our 'goods again, and are paid for the use 'of them, it is not our business to exa-'mine farther.'

Here ended the fruitless search of Alexis. He had now no shadow of hope for discovering the ravisher, but in the advertisement I had persuaded him to get inserted in the news-papers; and his despair became so outrageous, that it was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to go home. I went with him, fearing, if he was left alone in the street, he might be guilty of some extravagancy. It was one of the most fine frosty nights I had ever seen; and, while we were knocking at the door, he looked up towards the sky, and, with a voice denoting the extremest bitterness of heart, burst into this exclamation—'How many thou-'sand twinkling stars are there, yet not 'one among them all a friend to me, or 'poor undone Matilda!'

I went home with him, but privately gave William a caution not to go to sleep, but keep near his master, and be attentive to all his motions, in order to prevent any fatal effect of the present distraction of his mind. I then went home, but with an anxiety for this truly worthy, though ill-fated pair, that made me quit my bed very early next morning, with a resolution to exert my utmost endeavours for the mitigation of their sorrows, and, if possible, to reconcile Alexis to a misfortune which was without a remedy; but, unluckily for my design, a person came to speak with me about some business which detained me till almost twelve o'clock.

On my arrival at the place where I so much wished to be, I found Alexis just come in before me. He appeared with a countenance much more composed than the night before, but very pensive and melancholy: he presently acquainted me, however, with the occasion of his having been abroad; it was this—He told me he had passed the whole night in considering how he should act in relation to Matilda; and finding it a thing inconsistent with his honour to suffer her to remain in town after what had happened, he resolved to send her immediately into the country, and was just returned from hiring a post-chaise for that purpose. The reason he gave for his proceeding in this manner, was as follows—'She can-'not remain here, and be shut up, she 'must

'must appear sometimes; and who can 'tell but that in some unlucky minute 'she may be seen by the very villain 'who has ruined her, and who, either 'through curiosity, or the desire of re-'newing the gratification of his vicious 'flame, may discover whose wife she is, 'and wherever he sees me, point me to 'his lewd companions for the wretch he 'has made me!'

I had nothing to offer in opposition to what he said on this score, for indeed I thought it very proper they should both retire into the country; so replied, that I was glad I had called that morning, otherwise I should not have had the opportunity of wishing them a good journey: to which he hastily rejoined—'I 'shall not go.'—'How!' cried I, somewhat surprized, 'do you send away Ma-'tilda, and stay behind yourself!' A deep sigh was the first answer he gave; but the testimony of his discontent was presently succeeded by these words—'Yes, my friend, she must go without 'me: two days ago, nothing was so pre-'cious to me as her presence; I lived, 'indeed, but in her sight; every glance, 'every look she gave me, shot pleasure to 'my heart; but now, alas! those happy 'moments are fled, and I can regard 'her as no other than the ruined reliques 'of the woman once so dear to me!'

It was in vain I represented to him, that as I doubted not but he was perfectly convinced of the purity of Matilda's mind, he ought not to love her less for the violence her person had sustained: he owned the justness of my reasons, but could not prevail on himself to be governed by them; and when I urged the cruelty of sending her so long a journey without any companion to alleviate her sorrows, he made me this reply —'She does not go alone; her waiting-'maid, who, soon after our arrival in 'town, was obliged to be removed on 'account of the small-pox, is now quite 'recovered, and came home last night: 'this girl has attended Matilda for 'some years, and I know will be very 'careful of her.'

While we were discoursing, the chaise came to the door; on which Alexis called to have the luggage put in, and his wife to make herself ready. I asked him if he thought it proper I should take my leave of Matilda before her departure; he replied, that it was a ceremony which he believed she would gladly be dispensed with from receiving, in her present unhappy situation; but begged I would stay in the dining-room till he had dispatched this disagreeable affair. With these words he went out of the room, and I remained where I was. In less than half a quarter of an hour, looking through the window, I saw the disconsolate Matilda go out of the house, supported on one side by Alexis, and on the other by her attendant. I could not see her face; but her motions, and the distracted air with which she threw herself into the chaise, were enough to convince me of the extreme wretchedness of her condition.

Alexis returned to me in a situation little less pity-moving, yet could not my heart altogether absolve him for this last part of his behaviour to Matilda: it was now, however, a time to apply rather balms than corrosives to his bleeding and despairing mind; I therefore said every thing in my power to administer consolation to him, but all my endeavours that way were unsuccessful; and though I staid with him the greatest part of the day, had the mortification to leave him as I found him.

Oh! had the dark unknown beheld the sad effects his wild inordinate desires produced, he surely could not have sustained the shock, but must have revenged upon himself the mischiefs he had brought upon two worthy persons, so lately blessed, so truly loving and beloved!

CHAP. III.

CONSISTS OF SOME FARTHER PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO THE PRECEDING ADVENTURE; WITH TWO LETTERS WROTE BY THAT UNFORTUNATE LADY TO HER HUSBAND IN HER EXILE.

I Am very much afraid that Alexis will stand but little justified in the opinion of my fair readers for his conduct towards Matilda; they will doubtless say, that the love he pretended to have for her had taken but a shallow root in his heart, when it could be shaken by a misfortune which she had no way contributed to bring upon herself. They will, perhaps, also add, that after she had with so much simplicity, some may think folly too, revealed to him the whole of what

what had befallen her, it was not only unkind, but highly ungenerous and cruel in him to abandon her to deſpair, at a time when ſhe had ſo much need of the tendereſt compaſſion and conſolation.

I muſt confeſs, indeed, that theſe accuſations have the ſtrongeſt appearance of reaſon on their ſide; yet I muſt take upon me, notwithſtanding, to aver, that how much a paradox ſoever it may ſeem to ſome, Love, when in exceſs, may, on more occaſions than one, produce the ſame effects as hate. Certain it is, that it was chiefly owing to the too refined delicacy of the paſſion Alexis was poſſeſſed of for Matilda, that made them both ſo greatly wretched; the thoughts that another, though by force, had revelled in her charms, deprived thoſe charms of all their reliſh, and ſickened every wiſh. When we have been talking together on this head, often have I heard him, in the utmoſt bitterneſs of heart, expreſs himſelf in theſe terms—'I ſtill adore her mind; I know it is 'all compoſed of ſweetneſs, innocence, 'and truth; but, oh! the blemiſh caſt 'upon her perſon cannot be waſhed 'off but with the villain's blood; and, 'unleſs fate allows me the means of 'doing her and myſelf that juſtice, can 'never look upon her but as the ghoſt 'of my once dear wife!'

Finding, that to prevail on him to live with Matilda as a wife, was utterly impracticable, at leaſt till time had a little mellowed the aſperity of his reſentment, I forbore any farther ſpeech on that head, believing, that if a change in Matilda's favour ſhould ever happen, it muſt come wholly of himſelf, and not by the arguments of another.

It will be eaſy for the reader to judge of how little efficacy the perſuaſions of any friend could be to move him, when thoſe of the tender, the endearing, the ſo lately adored Matilda, proved in vain; which abundantly appear by the many letters ſhe ſent to him after her retirement, two only of which I got an opportunity of tranſcribing: the firſt was wrote immediately on her arrival at their country ſeat.

'MY DEAR, DEAR ALEXIS!

'I Am a ſufficient proof, that grief is 'not ſo fatal as ſome people would 'repreſent it, ſince I live to tell you I am 'ſafely arrived at ********. Yes, I 'am returned to that once bliſsful ſcene 'of ſoft delights, of pure and virtuous 'love. But, oh! that Heaven is fled, 'a ſad reverſe ſupplies it's place; and 'whereſoever I turn my eyes, horrors 'inſtead of joys riſe to my diſtracted 'view! I remember, that when you 'turned me from you, your laſt words 'were—"Be comforted, Matilda." 'Alas! you well know, without Alexis 'there is no comfort for Matilda; your 'preſence is the only balſam can aſſuage 'the tortures of my agonizing heart! 'If then, indeed, you wiſh me leſs the 'wretch I am, let me not linger long in 'a baniſhment more cruel than death! 'Quit that deteſted town, fly to my re'lief, and at leaſt join with me in be'wailing what is paſt a remedy.

'But, oh! I have too much cauſe to 'fear you have withdrawn all your af'fection from me, and am doubly mi'ſerable in a conſciouſneſs of being 'rendered unworthy to retain it. Yet, 'had ſickneſs, or any other accident, de'prived me of that little beauty nature 'has beſtowed upon me, and made me 'become lame, or blind, or crooked, I 'flatter myſelf you would have loved 'me ſtill; you would then have pitied 'and cheriſhed me in your boſom; and 'ſure, the misfortune that has befallen 'me, was as far removed from my ſeeking, 'as any of thoſe I have mentioned. I will 'not, however, anticipate the doom I 'ſo much dread; will not give way to 'apprehenſions diſtracting to myſelf, and 'I hope injurious to you. I know you 'are generous and juſt, and will endea'vour to aſſure myſelf thoſe noble prin'ciples, even without the aid of tender'neſs, will not permit you to hate me, 'to throw me off for ever, for my per'ſon having ſuſtained a violence, to 'which I am perſuaded you are con'vinced my mind was incapable of con'ſenting. I will believe that you feel 'all my woes, participate in my anguiſh, 'and that my pen ought rather to flow 'with words of conſolation than re'proach. Yet, if it is ordained that 'we muſt both be wretched, let us be 'wretched together; let us mingle our 'tears, and interchangeably echo back 'each other's ſighs; let us indulge de'ſpair; recal the memory of thoſe bliſs'ful hours we once enjoyed; compare 'the preſent with the paſt, and join in 'curſes on the baſe, the inhuman author 'of our woes!—But whither does my in-

'conſiderate

'conſiderate paſſion lead me! Does it 'become the love, the tenderneſs, the 'duty, of a wife, to wiſh you ſhould 'partake my ruin? No; ſince I can 'no longer contribute to your happi-'neſs, rather forget, renounce, aban-'don me for ever! Yet, oh! 'tis hard! '—My brain grows wild on the re-'flection—I can proceed no farther. 'Pity me, my moſt dear, my moſt adored 'Alexis! Pity, O pity, the undone, 'the loſt,

'MATILDA!

'P. S. If theſe diſtracting lines have 'any power to move you, if any 'remains of ſoft compaſſion to-'wards me ſtill dwell within your 'breaſt, write to me by the firſt 'poſt. Fix, I beſeech you, my 'uncertain fate. Oh, that I ſhould 'live to ſtand in need of intreaties 'to hear from you!'

When Alexis ſhewed me the above, he ſeemed all diſſolved in a flood of love and tenderneſs; yet I believe the anſwer he ſent to it was dictated in terms not altogether ſo ſatisfactory to Matilda as the preſent diſturbance of her mind required. Here follows the ſecond melancholy epiſtle of that unfortunate lady.

'My for ever dear, tho' unkind ALEXIS,

'WITH what anxiety have I watched 'the arrival of the poſt! how 'counted the tedious minutes as they 'glided on! how trembled between 'hope and fear on every knock given at 'the gate, while in expectation of a 'letter from you! At laſt it came; 'but, oh! I am not more at eaſe! 'Wherefore, Alexis, do you keep me 'in this cruel ſuſpence? I aſked no 'impoſſibilities of you, deſired you not 'to love me ſtill; I only begged the de-'ciſion of my fate; and, ſure, that is 'not a requeſt too much for me to 'make, or you to grant!

'My father, uncles, all my kindred 'and acquaintance, nay, our very ſer-'vants, ſtand amazed to ſee me here 'without you; they perceive my altered 'looks; and, with officious love, en-'quire into the cauſe. All the anſwer 'I can make is, that the air of London 'not agreeing with my conſtitution, I 'hurried back before ſome buſineſs you 'had in town would permit you to re-'turn. Theſe excuſes may paſs current 'for a time, but cannot do ſo long; I 'conjure you, therefore, by all you have 'to hope, or fear, or wiſh, not to ex-'poſe yourſelf and me to conjectures 'which cannot be to the advantage of 'either of our characters. Pronounce 'my doom; ſay that you will return, 'and live with me, in all appearance, 'as before, or ſcruple not to let me 'know you have reſolved on an eternal 'ſeparation; that I may retire, at once, 'to ſome dark corner of the world, and 'ſhut myſelf up from pity and con-'tempt. I know this ought to have 'been thought upon before you obliged 'me to remove from London; but both 'of us were in too much confuſion, at 'the time of parting, to give our cooler 'reaſon room to operate. We have 'ſince, however, had leiſure to reflect on 'what was proper to be done in our un-'happy circumſtances; and I flatter 'myſelf you will not think me too pre-'ſuming in being the firſt to mention it.

'O, Alexis! imagine not that, when 'I urge you to this eclairciſſement, I 'am ſo vain as to ſoothe my fond heart 'with a belief, that ſince the dreadful 'accident you ever can love me as be-'fore; no, I rather expect my ſentence 'will be that of an everlaſting baniſh-'ment: perhaps it is already ſigned 'within your breaſt, and the compaſſion 'you have for me alone delays the exe-'cution. If this ſhould be the caſe, 'throw aſide that cruel mercy which 'conceals it. Grief and deſpair have 'given me fortitude to bear the worſt 'of ills, and ſure there can be none 'half ſo dreadful to me as ſeeing you 'no more! So much the better for my 'eternal peace, as it will the ſooner rid 'me of the burden of a hated life. But 'I will trouble you no more than to re-'new my petition of knowing, in your 'next letter, what it is you have in ef-'fect decreed for the innocently cri-'minal

'MATILDA.

'P. S. Your old acquaintance and 'fellow collegian, Mr. L——, 'has juſt now ſent to enquire when 'you are expected down. He de-'ſigns, it ſeems, to ſet up, at the next 'general election, for the borough 'of *******, and greatly depends 'on the intereſt you have in that 'place.

'place. I ſuppoſe you will ſhortly
'receive a letter from himſelf on
'the occaſion. O may the calls
'of friendſhip give weight to thoſe
'I have mentioned, and influence
'you to return!'

I happened to be with Alexis at the time of his receiving this. He firſt read it to himſelf, then communicated it to me; and, when he had finiſhed, cried out, with an extraordinary emotion—'Poor Matilda! unhappy, charming 'woman! with what enchanting elo-'quence does ſhe plead againſt herſelf! 'how ſweetly labour to oppoſe what ſhe 'moſt wiſhes to obtain!'

As I found the ſtrongeſt reaſon in the arguments urged in Matilda's letter, I muſt confeſs that I was at a loſs to comprehend what he meant by ſpeaking in this manner; therefore deſired he would explain himſelf, which he immediately did, in theſe terms—'O friend! the 'more I diſcover of her merit, the leſs 'I am able to forget the violation of 'her honour! I muſt ceaſe to love her 'as I do, muſt bring myſelf to look 'upon her with the ſame indifference 'that moſt huſbands do upon their 'wives, before I can ſupport, with 'any tolerable degree of patience, the 'thoughts that another has poſſeſſed 'her.' Thus did he always talk whenever we were alone; and had Matilda known his ſentiments, I believe it would be a moot point whether ſhe would not rather have choſe a ſeparation than to live with him, after he had reduced himſelf to ſuch a ſtate of inſenſibility.

He now, indeed, began to give great indications that he had nothing more at heart than to loſe all remembrance, not only of the injury done to Matilda, but of herſelf alſo. By very ſwift degrees he became the reverſe of what he was before his going to that fatal maſquerade. The pleaſures of the bottle, and the converſation of the looſer part of womankind, divide too much of his time between them; and he ſeeks in riots and debaucheries his relief from melancholy. I am told, however, that he is at preſent preparing to ſet out for *****: but what ſatisfaction can the virtuous Matilda receive from his return, thus transformed, thus debaſed in morals and behaviour, from the man ſhe had ſo dearly loved, and who was once ſo worthy her eſteem?

How ſad a reverſe has a few weeks made in the condition of this lately happy pair! Surely the wretch—for ſo I muſt call him, be he of what degree or rank ſoever—who, for the ſake of gratifying the fleeting pleaſure of a moment, has brought this ruin on them, ought never to be forgiven in this world, whatever a ſincere contrition, if he is capable of it, may entitle him to in the next!

CHAP. IV.

THE AUTHOR HAVING FOUND SOMETHING IN HIS RAMBLES WHICH HE SUPPOSES MAY BE OF VALUE TO THE OWNER, CONDESCENDS TO TAKE UPON HIM THE OFFICE OF A TOWN-CRIER, BUT WAVES THE CEREMONY OF THE GREAT O YES.

HAPPENING one morning to wake more early than ordinary, I quitted my bed; and the weather being fine, and my humour more inclined to ſerioufneſs than gaiety, I took a little walk into Hyde Park, not with the leaſt expectation of making any diſcovery of other people's affairs, but merely to think of my own with more liberty than I could do at home. I met no living creature in my way, except ſome birds that perched upon the twigs of the leafleſs trees, and in melodious notes chanted forth praiſes to the approaching ſpring. Theſe rather indulging meditation, I paſſed ſlowly on by the ſide of the Serpentine River; where my eyes were attracted with the ſight of a white ſattin pocket lying juſt before me. I ſuppoſe it might have been dropped from ſome lady's ſide the night before; for, on my taking it up, I found it extremely damp with dew. I looked upon this as a lawful prize, and that I had a right to keep it, at leaſt till I could find ſomebody that had a better title; I therefore tied it up in my handkerchief, and, after having finiſhed my walk, took it home with me, where my impatience did not ſuffer me to continue long without examining it. I ſhall give a faithful inventory of all the particulars, reſerving only one in petto, in order to prevent being impoſed upon by any fictitious claimant.

Money being the chief idol of mankind,

kind, I shall give that the preference, and begin with the purse, which had in it five gold ducats, a leaden French shilling, a bent half-crown, and a medal of the Duke of Cumberland in copper, very curious, but by some accident had been cracked, and the impression in several parts pretty much erased. The next thing that presented itself was a very small pocket-book; which I shall forbear to describe, as well as make any mention of the memorandums it contained, to any person in the world but to the lady who wrote and shall come to demand them. There was also a chrystal smelling-bottle half full of sal armoniac, a tortoise-shell snuff-box rimmed with gold, and a naked Venus painted on the inside.

But the most valuable part of this cargo, at least according to my opinion, was some papers; not Bank-bills, but letters, and other writings, more deserving the attention of the publick, and which I shall make no scruple to insert, as they gradually fell under my inspection; especially as all of them having been sent under covers, which were not in the packet, the name of the lady to whom they were directed can only be guessed at.

LETTER I.

'MADAM,

'I Now send you the catalogue you 'have so often requested; but in- 'treat you will be so good as not to let 'any one soul in the world know you 'had it from him who has the honour 'to be, with the greatest respect, &c.'

The name subscribed to this had been torn off, either by design or accident; but the paper which accompanied it was perfect and entire. Here follows a faithful transcript.

A CATALOGUE OF SOME VERY SCARCE AND CURIOUS PIECES, IN PROSE AND VERSE: ALL WROTE BY SOME OF THE MOST EMINENT HANDS.

1. THE Art of Pleasing in Conversation. An Heroick Poem. By the E— of C——.

2. An Essay on Power. Wrote originally in High Dutch, and now translated by a person of distinction into English. Bound in red Turkey, finely gilt and lettered.

3. The Virtues of Carmine, with a Recipe how to prepare it with success. *Probatum est.* By the C—— of C——. Gilt back, and lettered.

4. Patient Grizel. A Poem in Six Cantos. By the real C—— of C——. Bound in calf, very plain.

5. The Politician Defeated. A Novel. In Three Parts. By the E—— of E——. Stitched in blue paper.

6. The Croaker. A Tragi-comical Farce of One Act. By L—— R——.

7. Cookery Improved, after the Epicurean Stile. By a Club of Gentlemen. In sheets.

8. The Chaste Maid; or, A New Way to Amuse the Town. A Comedy of Three Acts, each sufficient for a Winter Night's Entertainment. By the facetious H—— F——, Esq.

9. Rules to Chuse a Wife; shewing the Absurdity of all those generally observed. By Sir J—— C——. In boards.

10. A Philosophical Definition of Card Craft, upwards of Forty Years compiling. By the very learned and most ingenious Professor Mr. H——e. Stitched in gilt paper.

11. Frugality. A Poem. In Nine Cantos. By the C—— of B——. Bound in vellum.

12. A Collection of Jests and Merry Phrases, to keep Young People's Heads from Aching with more laborious Studies. By a Tutor in the Modish Sciences. Finely bound in blue Turkey, gilt back, and lettered.

13. Try before you Buy. A Poem after the Manner of Hudibras. By the E—— of R——. In boards.

14. The Charms of Novelty. A Pindarick Essay. By Miss C——. In sheets.

15. The Pleasures of Matrimony; or, Who would not be a Husband? A Farce. By L—— V——. Stitched, and very much sullied with often reading.

16. A Dissertation on Flies Eggs. By the President of a learned Society. In boards.

17. Laugh and Lie Down. A Ballad Opera of Three Acts. By L—— P——. Stitched in blue paper.

18. An Essay to prove that True Honour is always concomitant with

Good Senſe. By the E—— of O——. Bound in plain blue Turkey.

19. Conjugal Love. A Paſtoral of One continued Scene. By the E—— of N——. Printed on a new Elzevir letter, and neatly bound, without tawdrineſs or affectation.

20. The Patriot. A Secret Hiſtory. By G—— D——, Eſq. Bound in clouded calf.

21. The Double Dealer; or, The Weſtminſter Diſappointment. A Farce of Two Acts. By Sir G—— V——. Stitched in cap paper.

22. An Eulogy on Apoſtacy. By L—— G——. Bound in calf, and gilt back.

23. Love in a Bottle. A Poem, in Three Cantos. By the E—— of M——. Stitched in blue paper.

24. Redivivus; or, Old Age and Gallantry Reconciled. A Humorous Farce, of One Act. By the E—— of H——. Stitched.

25. An Exhortation to Hoſpitality to Foreigners, even though it ſhould happen to be deſtructive to the Liberties of the Natives. By L—— T——, as he delivered it at the Haymarket. Bound in the French taſte.

26. Criticiſms on the Play of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. By L—— P——. In boards.

27. The Fox Weary of Gooſe Hunting. A Fable. By the D—— of D——. Bound in parchment.

28. The Lover's Catechiſm. A New Ballad. By the celebrated Miſs A——.

29. An Infallible Remedy for Curing the Scotch Itch without Bleeding. By the D—— of A——.

30. The Beauties of Domeſtick Life, illuſtrated with Examples. A Paſtoral Eclogue. By the D—— of B——. Neatly bound.

31. Love Levels All; or, a Lucky Trip to Bath. An Epic Poem, without any Epiſodes. By C—— B——. Printed on a half worn-out letter, but very richly bound.

32. Inſtructions for a Supplement to Arthur Collins's Peerage of England. By L—— L——. Stitched in marble paper.

33. Verſes in Praiſe of Breeding. By Miſs W——.

34. True Magnificence. An Heroick Poem. By the D—— of M——. Finely bound.

35. Love in a Coach. A True Secret Hiſtory. By C—— V——. Stitched.

36. Second Thoughts Beſt. A Philoſophical Treatiſe, dedicated to a Brother of the Horn. By Mr. W——. Bound in ſheeps-ſkin.

37. The Triumvirate of Converts. Being a Series of Epiſtles on Moral and Religious Subjects, which paſſed between L—— T——, C—— G——, and Mrs. C——. In boards.

38. The Eſcape. A Satire. Inſcribed to L—— D—— M——, by a Well-wiſher to her Ladyſhip.

39. A Letter ſent with a Side of Veniſon to the celebrated Mrs. J—— D——, in the Piazza, Covent Garden. By L—— T——e.

40. A Short Treatiſe concerning Publick and Private Charities; proving to a Demonſtration, that the former are of much more Emolument to the Giver than the latter. By L—— E—— J——. Curiouſly bound, with a Regiſter.

41. The Humiliation. A Poem. Addreſſed to the Inexorables. By L—— G—— S——. Stitched.

42. A Prophecy that Votes for Members of Parliament will fall to no Price at the next Weſtminſter Election. By Sir W—— Y——.

Having folded and replaced this paper in the pocket whence I had taken it, I proceeded to the other.

LETTER II.

'DEAR MADAM,

'IT muſt be confeſſed you are endowed with a courage and reſolution ſuperior to what moſt of your ſex can boaſt of; but you muſt give me leave to ſay, at the ſame time, that in theſe affairs we men run much the greateſt hazards: in caſe of a diſcovery, our perſons are liable to fall a ſacrifice to the reſentment of an injured huſband, and our fortunes ſure to be ruined by way of reparation of his diſgrace; whereas the worſt you have to fear is a divorce. The laws are favourable to wives; the portion you brought with you is either returned, or an annuity equivalent: and as for the little ſhame you ſuſtain by ſuch a procedure, it is well atoned for by

'your

'your being freed from the loathſome careſſes of the man you hate, and at full liberty to purſue your inclinations with him you love. Be aſſured, Madam, I would venture much for the continuance of the bleſſing you permit me to enjoy; but I find the intercourſe between us begins to be ſuſpected, and you muſt therefore pardon me that I yield to neceſſity, and refrain any farther meetings with you, at leaſt for the preſent. I was yeſterday at court, and heard ſome whiſpers, that your jealous coxcomb would ſoon be ſent abroad: if ſuch a thing ſhould happen, as I have ſome pretty good reaſons to believe it will, I ſhall return with double tranſport to your embraces; till then, prudence obliges me to deny myſelf that happineſs. But at how great a diſtance ſoever I keep my perſon, I beg you will do me the juſtice to believe my heart is always with you; and that I can never ceaſe to be, with the greateſt ſincerity, &c.

'PHILETES.'

'P. S. I would not have you harbour any unjuſt ſuſpicions either of me or your fair friend; for, upon my ſoul! I never had the leaſt deſign upon her in the way you mean; and you will find, whenever it is convenient for me to renew my devoirs to you, that I like no woman better than yourſelf. Once more I bid you unwillingly adieu.'

LETTER III.

'DEAR CREATURE,

'YOUR Damon, and my Strephon, as we call them, are both with me. They have found out the moſt charming place that ever was for us to ſcamper to, whenever we can delude the eyes of our impertinent gaolers. If you can find any excuſe to get looſe from yours, the rendezvous agreed upon is the banks of the Serpentine River, juſt after ſun-ſet, whence we are to follow our leaders where they ſhall pleaſe to conduct us. Lady Fillup has a route to-night; you may tell your tyrant you are going there. But why ſhould I put pretences into a head ſo much more fertile than my own? Fail not to come, however, if it be not a thing utterly impoſſible for human wit to accompliſh: but let us know your reſolution by the bearer. I am, &c.

'CORINNA.

'P. S. While I was writing the above, Damon, to ſhew either his love or wit, or both, took up a pen, and employed it in the enclоſed.'

"TO MY SOUL'S TREASURE.

"FLY, charmer, fly! leave homebred cares behind;
"With thoughts of coming joys fill all your mind:
"Let ſmiling pleaſure wanton o'er your face,
"And kindling tranſports brighten ev'ry grace.
"Each vein of mine beats high with love's alarms;
"Haſte, then, and lull me gently in your arms!"

"I know I am a bad poet, but you will find me a better lover, and that your charms are capable of inſpiring me with more fire than all the ladies of Parnaſſus put together. I am, &c.

"DAMON."

The letter of Philetes, and that of Corinna and Damon, being dated on the ſame day, diſcovered to me that the lady who received them was not quite inconſolable for the loſs of one lover, as ſhe had another in ſtore; and alſo that ſhe failed not to comply with the invitation of Damon, and that ſhe had dropped her pocket at the rendezvous appointed by Corinna.

I make no queſtion but that the inquiſitive reader would be glad to know the name and rank of this ſo much admired lady; but as I can do no more, at moſt, than gueſs at either, I ſhould be loth to impoſe my bare and uncertain conjectures upon the publick, for fear of a miſtake, and being guilty of the worſt of wrongs, that of prejudicing the character of an innocent perſon. I wiſh every one would pay as much regard as myſelf to what Shakeſpeare ſays on this occaſion—

'Good name, in man or woman,
'Is the immediate jewel of our ſouls.
'Who ſteals my purſe, ſteals traſh; 'tis
'ſomething, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been ſlave
'to thouſands;
'But he that filches from me my good
'name,
'Robs me of that which not enriches him,
'And makes me poor indeed.'

Could I have formed even the moſt diſtant ſuppoſition to what place Strephon and Damon had conducted their ladies, I doubt not but my curioſity would have carried me thither, where my enquiries might perhaps have gained me the ſatisfaction of knowing how much of the night theſe inamoratos had paſſed together, and in what manner they had been entertained; but no mention being made of any thing farther than the place where they were to meet, I was obliged to content myſelf with what diſcoveries I had made, and ſo muſt the reader alſo.

I cannot conclude this chapter without an obſervation which has conſtantly occurred to me whenever any thing fell in my way of the kind I have been relating, which is this. As the wife has the honour of her huſband in keeping, it ſeems to me a moſt ungenerous and cruel addition to the crime of wronging his bed, when by publick indiſcretions ſhe expoſes him to that contempt and ridicule which the world, though without the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon or juſtice, is always ſure to caſt upon the huſband of a tranſgreſſing wife.

I know very well people are apt to ſay, that when a woman abandons herſelf to vice, ſhe preſently becomes utterly incapable of paying any regard to her own reputation, much leſs to that of her huſband; and that it appears a much greater matter of ſurprize when they ſee women, as it muſt be confeſſed many ſuch there are, who, without being criminal in fact, behave in ſuch a manner as to draw on themſelves the ſevereſt cenſures. Though I muſt allow that this too frequently happens, yet I cannot agree in opinion with thoſe who ſeem to wonder it ſhould be ſo, and look upon it as a kind of inconſiſtency in nature; I rather imagine that guilt is more likely to inſpire circumſpection. A woman who knows herſelf culpable, I ſhould expect to be very careful not to do any thing in publick that might cauſe ſuſpicion of her being leſs reſerved in private; whereas a conſciouſneſs of innocence, eſpecially in a thoughtleſs diſpoſition, may eaſily render a woman unguarded, and leſs obſervant of thoſe decorums which, though not eſſential to virtue, are doubtleſs neceſſary to reputation.

CHAP. V.

TURNS CHIEFLY UPON THE SUBJECT OF EDUCATION, AND CONTAINS SOME THINGS WHICH THE AUTHOR IS APPREHENSIVE WILL NOT BE VERY AGREEABLE TO THE FEMALE PART OF HIS READERS.

THE good or the ill fortune of our whole lives chiefly depends on the firſt bent given to our minds in youth. Impreſſions made in our early years take a deep root within us, grow up with us to maturity, become part of ourſelves; ſo that they may properly be called a ſecond nature, and are ſeldom, if ever, totally eradicated. According to one of our Engliſh poets—

'Children, like tender oſiers, take the bow;
'And, as they firſt are faſhion'd, ſtill will
'grow.'

For this reaſon it is that parents, unleſs they are very remiſs indeed, take ſo much pride in the education of their children, beſtowing on them every accompliſhment befitting their rank and circumſtances, and oftentimes more than will well agree with either. Yet all this will not do; there are ſome previous ſteps to be taken, without which all the improvements we can make, from the leſſons of the moſt able maſters, will never render us worthy the eſteem of others, or truly happy in ourſelves, for any length of time. Pride, and an impatience of controul, are the firſt propenſities diſcoverable in human nature: if theſe are humoured and indulged in their beginnings, which is indeed in our moſt early years, they will ſoon become too headſtrong and too turbulent to be afterwards reſtrained and ſubjected to the government of reaſon by any methods whatever that can be taken for that

that purpoſe; the firſt indications ſhould therefore be carefully watched, and checked in every inſtance.

I ſmile to think what objections are commonly made, by ſome over-fond parents, to ſuch a manner of proceeding. If I am not miſtaken, theſe two are the principal: that to curb children too much is apt to break their ſpirits; and that the world being ſo full of diſappointments, few people eſcape them when they come to maturity, it is pity the poor things ſhould know ſorrow before their time. To both which I take the liberty to make this reply—

Firſt, as to what they call the breaking of the ſpirit. That due decorum I would recommend, takes no more of the ſpirit from the young Maſter or Miſs than what is neceſſary to keep them from running into thoſe follies and exceſſes which, how excuſeable ſoever in childhood, render them contemptible in riper years; as the ſkilful gardener lops from his tender plant thoſe ſuperfluous branches which, if ſuffered to continue, would hinder it from growing to perfection. Then, as to the ſecond, every one knows the ſorrows their little hearts are capable of feeling make no laſting impreſſion on them; they will cry one moment, and laugh the next. The contradiction they meet with will only make them ſenſible that they neither can nor ought to expect they are to have their will in all things; and the trifling diſappointments given them, will enable them to ſuſtain with fortitude thoſe of more conſequence, which may hereafter poſſibly befal them. A boy is leſs liable to the danger of being ſpoiled by too much indulgence than a girl; becauſe he is no ſooner taken from the nurſery, than he is either put out to ſchool, or, if of a ſuperior rank, under the inſpection of a tutor.

I have the honour to be pretty nearly related, by marriage, to Lady Plyant; her late huſband being my firſt couſin. Decency obliges me to viſit the widow ſometimes: ſhe is a very affable, good-natured woman; and has, indeed, a greater ſhare of underſtanding than her too great compliance with the cuſtoms of the age will permit her to make ſhew of. She keeps a prodigious deal of company, for which reaſon I ſee her much leſs frequently than otherwiſe I ſhould do; but happening to paſs by her houſe one day when no coach or chair was in waiting there, I ventured to knock at the door, and was glad to be told ſhe was alone. I had not, however, been with her above ten minutes, before two or three loud raps proclaimed the approach of ſome new gueſt, and preſently after a grave elderly lady was introduced. Lady Plyant received her with much politeneſs, and a great ſhew of friendſhip; and, after the firſt ſalutations were over, and we had re-ſeated ourſelves, ſaid to her—

Lady Plyant. Dear Mrs. Loyter, I have not ſeen you this age, and have been quite unhappy in the want of you.

Mrs. Loyter. Dear Lady Plyant, the loſs is wholly mine. But I have been ſo embarraſſed—my poor girl has been extremely indiſpoſed.

Lady Plyant. Bleſs me! Miſs not well, and I hear nothing of it! But I hope ſhe is better?

Mrs. Loyter. Perfectly recovered, Madam. She will have the honour of waiting on your ladyſhip this evening. She is gone to make a few viſits, but prayed heartily to find nobody at home, that ſhe might follow me here the ſooner.

Lady Plyant. How perfectly kind that was! Well, ſhe is a charming creature; you are the happieſt woman in the world in having ſuch a daughter. I proteſt, among all my acquaintance, I do not know any young lady that comes up to her; there is ſomething ſo ſweet, ſo engaging, in every thing ſhe does.

Mrs. Loyter. She is infinitely obliged to your ladyſhip. Indeed, I have taken a great deal of pains with her; for, as I have no other daughter, I ſhould never have forgiven myſelf if I had not uſed my utmoſt endeavours to form her mind ſo as to make her as agreeable as poſſible to her acquaintance.

Lady Plyant. Oh, Madam, the world muſt allow you have; Miſs is the darling of every body that knows her.

Mrs. Loyter. The girl has a great deal of good-nature, Madam, and does not want a genius and capacity to mingle in converſation on almoſt any ſubject becoming a young lady to be acquainted with.—

I had been upon the wing to take my flight almoſt from the moment Mrs. Loyter came in; but what was ſaid in relation to her daughter determined me to ſtay till Miſs arrived, in order to be convinced how far her perſon and behaviour correſponded with the high character

racter which had been given of her. At length Miſs Loyter appeared, and I ſtretched my eyelids to their full extent, to take in all the charms I had heard ſhe was poſſeſſed of. The girl, indeed, was well enough; but I could diſcover nothing extraordinary about her, nor did her eyes or air give any indications of that capacity her mother ſeemed to boaſt of; but as I thought it unfair to give a verdict on mere appearances, I ſuſpended my judgment on her underſtanding till I had more ſubſtantial proofs.

The diſcourſe at firſt was only on where ſhe had been, who ſhe had ſeen, and how ſuch and ſuch a lady was dreſſed. I found Miſs talked very learnedly on this ſubject, and therefore was not without hope of hearing ſomething from her equally lively on others of more importance; but none being ſtarted, I was compelled to liſten to the ſeveral animadverſions made by theſe three ladies on caps, flounces, and ſuch like. At laſt, Miſs happening to ſay that ſhe had met Mrs. O—— in one of the viſits ſhe had been making, I preſently catched up the word, and ſaid to her—'Then, Madam, I 'doubt not but ſome converſation paſſed 'which you will do us the favour to re-'peat, as the lady you mention is per-'fectly acquainted with publick affairs, 'and indeed reaſons on them very juſtly.' To which ſhe replied—'So they ſay, Sir; 'but ſhe was juſt going out when I came 'in; and indeed I was heartily glad of 'it, for I hate to hear a deal of ſtuff 'about things I know nothing of.' As I had a good ſhare in the enſuing part of this converſation, I ſhall, to avoid confuſion, repeat my own words as if ſpoke by another perſon.

Author. Then, Madam, you have no reliſh for politicks?

Miſs. No truly, Sir. What buſineſs have I with the tranſactions of kings, and princes, and parliaments? It makes me ſick to hear ſo much of wars, and treaties, and conventions, and taxes, and grievances, and ſuch nonſenſe.

Author. I muſt confeſs, Madam, the affairs of Europe are a little intricate at preſent, and may be puzzling to a lady's comprehenſion; but I ſuppoſe you are not unacquainted with the hiſtories of former times.

Miſs. Lord, Sir, what have I to do with former times?

Author. Every one, Madam, has to do with the annals of the country they were born in.

Mrs. Loyter. Theſe things are quite out of my daughter's way; but for all that, I can aſſure you, Sir, ſhe reads a great deal.

Author. It would be a pity, indeed, Madam, ſo fine a young lady ſhould be altogether ignorant of books. I imagine, therefore, that Miſs's genius ſoars to a higher pitch, the wonders of the creation; I make no queſtion but ſhe has read Le Spectacle de la Nature.

Mrs. Loyter. I believe not, Sir.—Have you, my dear?

Miſs. Not I, truly; but I have heard enough of it. They ſay there are four volumes of it taken up with nothing but a deſcription of trees, birds, beaſts, fiſhes, and naſty inſects.

Author. What do you think, Madam, of Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds?

Miſs. O hang it, I was never ſo diſappointed in my life; I thought by the beginning, when I found a gentleman and lady were taking their walk together by moon-light, ſome pretty adventure would have enſued; but, good God! the author has made them talk of nothing but planets, and the things that happen in the ſky.

Author. I fancy, then, Miſs, romances and novels are chiefly your taſte.

Miſs. I hate romances, they are too tedious; as for novels, I like ſome of them well enough, particularly Mrs. Behn's: but I know not how it is, the authors now-a-days have got ſuch a way of breaking off in the middle of their ſtories, that one forgets one half before one comes to the other.

Author. Digreſſions, Miſs, when they contain fine ſentiments and judicious remarks, are certainly the moſt valuable parts of that ſort of writing.

Miſs. I cannot think ſo; and I could wiſh the authors would keep their ſentiments and remarks to themſelves, or elſe have them printed in a different letter, that one might know when to begin and when to leave off.

Author. I preſume, Miſs, you are fond of poetry?

Miſs. Not very fond; I can't ſay I ever read much of it.—

I thought I had now ſufficiently ſounded the genius and capacity of this young lady; therefore ceaſed to engroſs her any longer to myſelf, and ſoon after took my

my leave, ſecretly wondering at the ſtrange partiality of Mrs. Loyter, in regard both of herſelf and daughter. A few hours, however, made me begin to judge ſomewhat more favourably of theſe ladies. 'Though Mrs. Loyter,' ſaid I within myſelf, 'is miſtaken in believing 'ſhe has been able to make her daughter paſs for a wit, her endeavours, notwithſtanding, may have had better ſucceſs in other accompliſhments more eſſential to her happineſs; ſhe may have made her a good œconomiſt, and perfectly acquainted with every thing requiſite for the well managing a family.'

I had the more reaſon to imagine that this young lady was trained up in frugality and good houſewifery, as I had been told, that Mr. Loyter lived to the height of his income; that he ſaved no money; had ſeveral ſons, the eldeſt of whom, after his deceaſe, was to run away with the eſtate; ſo that it could not be expected the daughter would have any fortune to entitle her to a huſband at all ſuitable to the appearance ſhe made. But, as I was always willing to be convinced whether my conjectures were right or wrong, I reſolved to make an Inviſible Viſit to this family. Juſt as I came to the houſe, Mr. Loyter was going out, and the door being opened for him, I ſlipped in, and went up ſtairs. The old lady was ſitting in the dining-room window with her ſpectacles on, very hard at work. Breakfaſt was but juſt over, as I found by the maid's removing the tea-equipage; and Miſs was gone up to dreſs, it ſeems, for ſhe came down preſently after in the ſame form I had ſeen her at Lady Plyant's: ſhe ran directly to the great glaſs, in order to examine how her petticoats hung at the bottom; and then turned to her mother, and ſeeing what ſhe was about, ſaid to her—

Miſs. Lord, mamma, have you not done mending my tippet yet!

Mrs. Loyter. Indeed, my dear, it is paſt mending; you have torn the lace in twenty places, I believe, with thoſe ugly pins in your ſtomacher; I wiſh you would take more care of your things.

Miſs. Indeed I can't be a ſlave to my cloaths.

Mrs. Loyter. I would not have you, my dear; but this vexes me, becauſe it is the only handſome tippet you have. You muſt e'en try to coax your father to give you a couple of pieces to buy you another, the firſt time you find him in a good humour; for I aſſure you I have not a ſingle guinea in the world.

Miſs. Well, 'tis a ſhameful thing one has not money enough without aſking for, when one has a fancy to any thing. But, mamma, can nothing be done with this lace?

Mrs. Loyter. It will never make up again in the ſhape it is; but I believe I may contrive to make a handſome tucker of it.

Miſs. Oh, I ſhall like a tucker of it vaſtly. Pray, mamma, do it as ſoon as you can.

Mrs. Loyter. Where are you going, my dear?

Miſs. I am only going to the next ſtreet to Lady Lovetoy's, to aſk if Miſs will take a walk with me in the Park.

Mrs. Loyter. Do not ſtay too long; your father brings company home today, and we are to have a great dinner. Mr. Bloſſom, and his ſon juſt come from the univerſity, are to be here, ſo I would not have you out of the way for the world; who can tell what may happen?

Miſs. Oh, why did not I know that ſooner? I would have had on my new gauze cap; but, 'tis no matter, I will come home time enough to change it.

With theſe words ſhe ſnatched up her little muff, and galloped down ſtairs, leaving her poor mother poring over the breaches ſhe had undertaken to rectify.

Methinks I hear how heartily the gay and witty part of my readers will laugh at the character of Miſs Loyter; they will certainly look upon her as a ſtalking, ſtaring, ſtupid, noteleſs creature; a moving piece of mere matter, uninformed by any ſoul or ſpirit, wholly incapable of deſerving praiſe, and equally inſenſible of contempt. 'Tis true ſhe appears ſo, yet may it not be owing ſo much to any deficiency of nature in her, as to the miſtaken fondneſs of a mother, who, fearing to give her a moment's diſcontent, neglected to rouze the native ſluggiſhneſs of her faculties by any exerciſe or employment.

What therefore can be expected from a young perſon bred in a ſupine indolence, accuſtomed to have her will in every thing, and ſcarce taught the difference between good and evil; but that ſhe ſhould, all her life, act as chance, or as her own undiſtinguiſhing fancy ſhall direct?—Bleſs all ſober and thinking men from a wife of this caſt!

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE AUTHOR EXPECTS WILL MAKE A FULL ATONEMENT TO THE LADIES FOR TOO MUCH PLAIN DEALING, AS SOME OF THEM MAY THINK, OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

WOMEN and wedlock are the common topicks of ridicule among men who, without one ſpark of genius or capacity, imagine themſelves wits, and ſet up for ſuch: but, whatever either they, or ſome who even have a better way of thinking in other things, pretend to alledge againſt the ſex, it is very evident, and muſt be confeſſed, that Nature has endowed the minds of many women with as great and valuable talents as ever ſhe beſtowed on men.

Numberleſs are the examples which might be brought from the records, both of ancient and modern hiſtory, to prove the truth of this aſſertion; but I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning only a few, yet enough to make thoſe unworthy maligners of a ſex, to whom they know in their own hearts they are indebted for all the convenience and happineſs of their lives, take ſhame to themſelves, and bluſh for what they have ſaid. Who is ſo ignorant, as not to have heard of the famed Cornelia of Rome; the mother of the Gracchi, and the wife of Brutus; the learned Hypatia of Greece; the Boadicea and the Cartiſmuda of ancient Britain? But it is needleſs to look back into ſuch diſtant times; the wife of the late Peter the Great of Muſcovy; the imperial heroine of Germany; Signora Laura of Italy; and the preſent queens of Sweden and the Two Sicilies; are no leſs publick than ſhining proofs of the capacity of a female mind. And even here, there are not wanting ſome, I may ſay many ladies, who in private, and almoſt obſcure life, are poſſeſſed of qualifications that might add luſtre to the higheſt ſtations. In fine, there is nothing more certain, than that if the women, generally ſpeaking, are leſs knowing than the men, it is only becauſe they are denied the ſame advantages of education, and the miſtaken mother laviſhes her whole cares in embelliſhing the pretty perſon of her daughter, and gives no attention to the cultivation of her underſtanding.

I am happy in the acquaintance of a lady whom I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Amadea: ſhe had been married very young to a gentleman whom ſhe tenderly loved, and by whom ſhe was no leſs beloved; but had the misfortune to loſe him at the age of twenty-five, and was at the ſame time the mother of three daughters, the eldeſt ſcarce four years old. The land eſtate, which was very conſiderable, deſcended to the next male heir of the family; and all the perſonals, with a jointure of four hundred per annum, to the fair widow, and each of her children five thouſand pounds.

The firſt three years of her widowhood ſhe lived the life of a recluſe, ſeldom ſtirring out of her own houſe, except to her devotions, or when the neceſſity of her affairs obliged her. Nor did ſhe, with her mourning, throw this reſerve entirely off: though it is now full thirteen years ſince her dear huſband's death, ſhe neither viſits nor receives viſits as formerly, but confines her converſation to thoſe of her kindred, or very long and intimate acquaintance; never appears at any publick diverſion, and rejects even the firſt mention of propoſals for a ſecond marriage, though ſeveral very advantageous ones have been attempted.

All her cares have been turned on the education of her children, and all her pleaſures centered in obſerving the improvements they made by the inſtructions given to them. She had never ſuffered their infancy to be frighted with idle ſtories of ſpirits and hobgoblins, nor amuſed with fairy tales: from their moſt early years ſhe awakened reaſon in them; and contrived it ſo, that even the little ſports ſhe indulged them in, ſhould ſome way or other conduce to that great end.

As they grew bigger, ſhe had maſters to teach them muſick and dancing, the French and Italian languages, and as much of the Latin as was ſufficient to make them ſpeak and write Engliſh properly: but theſe politer ſtudies were not to take up all their time; the œconomy of domeſtick life ſhe looked upon as too neceſſary a qualification not to be well attended to; ſome hours in every day were ſet apart for needle-work; and, whenever the table was to be furniſhed with any thing extraordinary, they were ſure to be put under the tuition of the cook, and frequently aſſiſted her in thoſe parts of her buſineſs which were the moſt delicate and leaſt laborious.

Thus deſirous of enriching their minds with

with every useful kind of knowledge, it cannot be supposed that books were out of the question; no, each of these young ladies takes upon her, in her turn, to read to the two others the whole time they are at work. But, above all other things, this discreet mother was studiously watchful to prevent the pride and little vanities, so incident to human nature, from taking too fast hold of their young hearts. Betimes she taught them, that nothing concerning themselves, except the embellishment of their minds, was worthy their attention; that all cares relating to dress or person, beyond what cleanliness and decency required, were superfluous and silly; and that every minute wasted at the toilet would rob them of some advantage they might otherwise receive. I am well aware, those of my fair readers who have been brought up in a different manner—which, by the way, I fear are much the greatest part—will be apt to cry out against the conduct of Amadea; they will perhaps say, they wonder the poor girls are not moped, and that they must certainly be dull, stupid creatures; but those who think thus need only have a sight of the young ladies to be convinced of their mistake: nothing can be more lively and spirituous than all the three sisters; smiles of innocence and joy dwell for ever on their faces, and denote an innate chearfulness and satisfaction, which all those hurrying pleasures, so eagerly pursued by others, have not the power of bestowing.

I made several Invisible Visits to them in their own apartment; and I know very few things capable of giving me a more sincere delight than I took in observing their behaviour, at times when they thought themselves entirely free from all inspection, and had no occasion to put restraint upon their words or actions. Never did I find them lolling out of a window, or consulting their looks or motions in the great glass; never heard them complaining they were not permitted to be first in every new fashion; never wishing to be in the Mall, or any other publick place; never wantonly giggling about love or lovers; never quarrelling with each other, or ridiculing the foibles of their acquaintance. Sometimes I caught them playing and singing to their instruments; at others, amusing themselves with practising some new dance, and not seldom busily employed in needle-work for the use of the family; and at the same time, making such remarks as occurred to them on some passage or other in history: in fine, I could perceive nothing but what put me in mind of the three Graces, who, according to one of our poets, are actuated but by one soul, and that all harmony and sweet contentment.

The truth is, Amadea never makes use of any austerity; the precepts she gives are only enforced by her own example, and delivered in such a manner as to steal themselves upon the mind, and have no need of any compunction from authority: so that one may truly say—

'Wisdom in her appears so bright and gay,
'They hear with pleasure, and with pride 'obey.

Happy the children who have such a mother; happy the mother who has children such as these! I am persuaded, many examples of this kind might be found, if parents would be at the pains to pursue the same measures Amadea did, and instil into their offspring the principles of virtue and wisdom, before they knew what was meant by vice and folly.

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINS THE RECITAL OF AN ADVENTURE, WHICH, PERHAPS, WILL NOT BE FOUND LESS INTERESTING, FOR IT'S BEING NOT ALTOGETHER OF SO SINGULAR A NATURE AS SOME OTHERS IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE APPEARED.

I Was one morning taking my Invisible progression into those pleasant fields which lie behind Montague House, not with the least view of making any discoveries, for I could expect none in that retired place, but merely to enjoy the benefit of the fresh air. I had not walked many minutes, however, before I heard the tread of some persons close behind me. I stepped aside to let them pass, and saw that one of them was Narcissa, the only daughter of a gentleman who lived in that neighbourhood. The person who accompanied her was her maid, as I soon after found by the following dialogue between them—

Narcissa. Indeed, Betty, I think Captain Pike shews but little love to let us be here before him.

Betty. Oh, Madam, you ſhould conſider that gentlemen in his poſt are not always maſters of their time: you know he ſaid he came to town on affairs of the regiment, and ſomething, perhaps, may have happened; but, whatever it is that detains him, it cannot be for want of affection; I am ſo certain of that, I would pawn my life upon it.

Narciſſa. You are very confident, Betty, to offer ſuch ſecurity for a man you have never ſeen but twice in your life.

Betty. If I had never ſeen him but once, Madam, I have ſeen enough to make me know that he loves you to diſtraction. Poor gentleman! if he ſhould not ſucceed in his addreſſes, I am ſure he has reaſon to curſe me.

Narciſſa. Curſe thee, Betty!—why curſe thee?

Betty. He might never have ſeen you if it had not been for me. Don't you remember, Madam, how I teazed you to go into a ſhop, and buy the laſt new play? He was ſitting reading when we came in; and I ſhall never forget how he threw down the pamphlet he had in his hand, and ſtared at you, and how he ſighed. Poor ſoul! he loſt his heart from that very moment. Then how he followed us into the Park; and how he trembled when he aſked your leave to join us!

Narciſſa. Piſh! that might be all affectation.

Betty. No, Madam, no ſuch matter; the tone may deceive one, but the eyes cannot. And then, when you were ſo good to give him a meeting afterwards in the walk by Roſamond's Pond, how tenderly he expreſſed himſelf! For my part, my heart melted at every word he ſaid.

Narciſſa. He can talk moving enough, that's certain; but yet, Betty, I ought not to be too haſty in giving credit to a man I know ſo little of, or what deſigns he may have upon me.

Betty. Nay, Madam, I think you know as much of him as you can do without being married to him. Did not he tell you his name was Pike, and that he was a captain of Colonel *******'s regiment? As to his deſigns, you cannot doubt of their being honourable, as he begged you would permit him to viſit you, and aſk your father's leave to make his addreſſes.

Narciſſa. Ah, Betty, I wiſh ſuch a thing could be, for he is a prodigious pretty man; but it is impoſſible! You know my father hates a ſoldier, calls them a pack of locuſts; beſides, he has always deſigned me for Mr. Oakly.

Betty. Aye, Madam, and will make you have Mr. Oakly too, or lead apes in hell, if you don't take care to prevent it.

Narciſſa. Heigh ho!

Betty. Never ſigh, Madam, but reſolve.

Narciſſa. On what?

Betty. To run away from a forced marriage; to exert the ſpirit of a true-born Engliſhwoman, and be your own provider.

Narciſſa. How thou talkeſt!

Betty. I talk nothing but reaſon, Madam. But here comes one who I fancy will be able to urge it more effectually.

The perſon whom ſhe had been ſo ſtrenuouſly pleading for, now appeared: he was a tall, well-made man, and had a good ſoldierly aſpect; but yet I thought I diſcovered ſomething about him that ſhewed he had not always been accuſtomed to wear the rich cloaths he now had on; there wanted that eaſy freedom in his air, which denotes the true-bred gentleman; and I preſently ſet him down in my mind, either for an impoſtor, or one whom ſome lucky chance had elevated far above his birth. He approached Narciſſa with a low bow; and after taking hold of one of her hands, and kiſſing it with the greateſt fervency, addreſſed her in theſe terms—

Capt. How miſerable have I been, my angel, in being kept thus long from your divine preſence!

Narciſſa. I do not doubt, Sir, but you have been better engaged.

Capt. Cruel ſuppoſition! How can you ſo far wrong me, as to imagine that the whole world has any thing in it I ſhould put in competition with the bleſſing I now enjoy? But the major of our regiment is in town, and unluckily ſent for me this morning: we ſubalterns muſt obey our commanding officer; but I hope in a few months to be colonel, and I ſhall then have leiſure to lie eternally at your feet.

Betty. Ah, Sir, I am afraid, before that time, my lady will be obliged to have ſomebody elſe lie at her feet.

Narciſſa. Hold your prating, huſſy. Who gave you the privilege of ſpeaking?

Betty. Madam, the reſpect I have for you will not ſuffer me to be ſilent.—I tell

tell you nothing but the truth, Sir; my lady will be forced to marry a man to whom she has the greatest aversion.

Capt. O Heaven! so near being torn from all my hopes! And can you, Madam, can a lady of your delicacy submit——

Narcissa. Sir, this foolish wench talks she knows not what; I may live single if I please.

Capt. Live single! Heaven forbid! No, nature endowed you not with such superior charms, but to bless some man who, by his abundant love, might make him worthy of them. O that I were the happy he!

Narcissa. Think not of it, Captain; my father would never give his consent to any one but the person he has made choice of for me; much less would he endure to see me wedded to a gentleman in the army.

Capt. And have you, too, that implacable aversion to a sash and croslet?

Narcissa. I will not pretend to say I have; I think the army our only security in time of war, and the greatest ornament of our country in times of peace.

Capt. O, then, if I could flatter myself there was nothing in my person more disagreeable to you than in my function, I should have nothing left to fear.

Narcissa. Yes, indeed, you would, Sir, a great deal; for I assure you, if I married you, my father would not give me a groat.

Capt. Let him keep his dirty trash; I despise money; the commission I enjoy at present will keep us above contempt, and I have money in the Bank ready to purchase the first vacant command of a regiment.

Narcissa. Can you imagine I would give myself to a man who has but just begun to tell me that he loves me?

Capt. My whole life shall be but one continued scene of courtship; be assured I shall not be the less, but infinitely the more your adorer by being your husband. O, then, be just to my ardent passion, generously put an end to my despair.

Narcissa. Bless me, what would the world say of such a thing!

Capt. The wise, Madam, despise all forms. Do not kings and princes marry those they never saw before? Besides, the late proceedings of the legislature lay you under a necessity of coming to a speedy resolution.

Betty. Aye, Madam, remember the act.

Capt. Aye, Madam, consider how soon that fatal Monday will arrive, which takes from you the power of snatching from misery the man who loves you more than life, and would sacrifice every thing for you!

Narcissa. I must confess, Captain, your offering to take me without a fortune demands some gratitude on my part; and if— But no more; I see a lady yonder whom I would not wish should surprize us in this conversation: this evening you shall know my final resolution. Where can I send to you?

Capt. I have an appointment with some young officers this afternoon at Will's Coffee-House, Whitehall, and shall there wait my doom with the most ardent impatience; but before you pass the sentence of my fate, think, O think, my life or death depends upon it!

Narcissa. Well, well, be easy; but go.

Capt. I must obey: may Love and all it's powers plead for me!

He said no more, but turned away as his mistress had commanded, and passed on to another part of the field, while she advanced to meet the lady she had mentioned. But Betty, who was heartily vexed at this accident, could not forbear crying out as they went along—'I wonder what should bring Marilla here!'

The words were either not heard, or not regarded by Narcissa, who, I could perceive by her looks, was little less disconcerted: she met her friend, however, with a shew of gaiety and satisfaction; and as soon as they came near each other, saluted her in these terms—

Narcissa. My dear Marilla! it is a wonder to see you in such a place as this; you used to be an enemy to all solitary walks.

Marilla. So I am still; but I have been at your house, and was told you were here, so came in mere good nature to hinder you from indulging melancholy; but I find I might have spared myself that trouble. Pray, who was that pretty fellow that left you just now?

Narcissa. I know not, he only came up to us, seeing nobody else in the place, I suppose, to ask which was the nearest way to Great Russel Street.

Marilla. Rather to ask the way to a lady's heart, who lives not far from Great Russel Street. Oh, Narcissa, you cannot deceive me; I could easily perceive, at

the diſtance I was, that he did not part from you with the air of a man who had no other buſineſs than to aſk ſuch an impertinent queſtion. Beſides, I muſt tell you that you are a very ill diſſembler; your bluſhes declare that he is a lover: I know well enough that you met him here by appointment. Pr'ythee, let me into the whole of the ſecret.

Narciſſa ſtill perſiſted in her firſt aſſertions; but the other ſeemed not to give credit on that ſcore, and aſſuming a more ſerious air, ſpoke thus—

Marilla. I perceive, my dear Narciſſa, I am not thought worthy of your confidence, though I am very certain you have not a friend in the world who wiſhes your happineſs with more ſincerity than I do.

Narciſſa. I believe it, my dear, and am much obliged to you; but you would not have me tell lyes to ſhew my gratitude?

Marilla. Well, well, I ſhall urge you no farther; and ſhould not have been ſo impertinent to take any notice of what I ſaw, but for the tranſport it gave me to imagine you might now have an opportunity of delivering yourſelf from the danger of being forced into a marriage with a man whom I have heard you declare ſo great an averſion for.

Narciſſa. And ſuppoſe the thing were really as you have taken it into your head to fancy, would you have me diſoblige my father by marrying without his conſent?

Marilla. Yes, when he will give his conſent to nobody but one with whom you muſt be miſerable; for, beſides the diſlike you have to the perſon of Oakly, his temper is ſuch as would break a woman's heart in two months. You know I am very intimate with his ſiſter, and cannot avoid ſeeing oddities in his behaviour as have made me tremble for you a thouſand times.

Narciſſa. I cannot think my father will ever go about to compel my inclinations.

Marilla. Oakly is of another opinion; for I can tell you, he makes no ſcruple to ſay, that if you do not marry him, you will marry nobody: therefore, without diving into the ſecrets of your heart, let me adviſe you, my dear creature, not to loſe the ſhort time allowed you, but if you have any offer leſs diſagreeable to you than Oakly, accept it at once; three days hence it will be out of your power.

Narciſſa. But, my dear, what man that is worth having will marry a woman without a fortune?

Marilla. If I were a man, I ſhould tell you that your perſon was a ſufficient fortune, and I do not doubt but that there are a great many who would think ſo. But you have two thouſand pounds left you by your grandmother, independent of your father; and I dare ſay, if you were once married, and the thing paſt recal, he would forgive it. Conſider, you are his only daughter, and both your brothers are provided for; the one by an eſtate, and the other by a good preferment in the church.

What anſwer Narciſſa would have made I know not: it began to rain very faſt, ſo that the ladies were obliged to mend their pace, and make all the haſte they could out of the field. Marilla took the firſt chair ſhe met with, ſaying it would be dinner time before ſhe ſhould be able to get dreſſed. Narciſſa and her maid ran home through the ſhower, and I followed; not only to take ſhelter, but alſo to hear the reſult of the young lady's determination on what had paſſed between her and Captain Pike. As ſoon as they had plucked off their wet hats and capuchins, and Narciſſa had a little re-ſettled herſelf, ſhe ſaid to her maid—

Narciſſa. Well, Betty, this has been an odd morning!

Betty. I hope it will prove a lucky one, Madam. But I am glad you did not tell Marilla any thing of the matter.

Narciſſa. She was ſo preſſing, that I had half a mind; but when I conſidered how great ſhe is with Oakly's ſiſter, I thought it was better to keep her in ignorance.

Betty. Much better, indeed, Madam. But, pray, what do you reſolve to do about the captain?

Narciſſa. Why, I muſt e'en have him, I think.

Betty. You made him a kind of promiſe to ſend to him.

Narciſſa. I did ſo, and will keep it. I will write to him this moment, before any company comes in to prevent me.

Betty. You are in the right, Madam: there is nothing like the time preſent.

'TO CAPTAIN PIKE.

'SIR,

'I Should be guilty of an injuſtice 'both to myſelf and you, not to be 'ſenſible of the proof you offer of your 'ſincerity. I find in it, indeed, all that 'can be imagined, and much more than 'could be expected, of love, honour, 'and generoſity; and I hope I ſhall 'hereafter ſtand excuſed to my father 'and the world, for taking a ſtep ex-'cited by gratitude, and approved of by 'my reaſon. Meet me, therefore, to-'morrow morning, at eight preciſely, 'in the Piazza next King Street, Co-'vent Garden; where I will put myſelf 'under your protection, and be con-'ducted by you to whatever place you 'ſhall judge moſt proper for the ce-'remony which muſt make me eternally 'yours.

'NARCISSA.'

Having ſealed this billet, ſhe gave it to her maid, with a ſtrict charge to ſend it by a truſty meſſenger. On which the girl replied—'Yes, Madam, you may 'depend on the ſafe conveyance; for I 'will be the bearer of it myſelf.'

What farther chat paſſed between the miſtreſs and maid was too inſignificant to be repeated; nor, indeed, did I ſtay to hear much of it, having already gained all that was neceſſary for the preſent: ſo ſhut up my Tablets, and retired on the firſt opportunity I found for my leaving the houſe.

As it was plain to me, however, that Betty was deeply intereſted in the conceſſion Narciſſa had made to the captain, and I had alſo ſome ſuſpicion that he was not in reality the perſon he pretended to be, I reſolved to go in the evening to the coffee-houſe, and be witneſs of his behaviour on receiving the letter Betty was to bring. Accordingly I went, and found him there; not, as he ſaid, in company with young officers, but ſitting alone, in a corner of the room, with his hat very much flapped. A few minutes after I came in, a waiter called aloud to know if one Captain Pike was there; on which he ſtarted up, and anſwering to the name, was told a gentlewoman at the door deſired to ſpeak with him. He went haſtily out, and I purſued his ſteps, not doubting but it was the emiſſary of Narciſſa: as ſoon as he ſaw it was ſhe, he cried out, in ſome ſurprize—

Capt. What, ſiſter, are you come yourſelf! You bring me no bad news, I hope?

Betty. No, no; the beſt you can expect. But walk this way; it is not proper to ſtand here to talk. For Heaven's ſake! why did you venture to appoint ſuch a publick place as this?

Capt. Nobody knows me here; my captain never uſes this houſe. But tell me, how goes our affair?

Betty. Rarely. She will have you; here is her promiſe under her own hand.

By this time they were got about the middle of Scotland Yard; where Betty having given him the letter of Narciſſa, he ſtopped to read it by the light of a lamp at a gentleman's door; and, as ſoon as he had finiſhed, cried out—

Capt. This is brave, indeed! And nothing, ſure, was ever ſo lucky as her fixing to-morrow for our wedding; for the captain went to Hampſtead this morning, with a whore he picked up in the Park the other night, and will not be in town theſe two days; ſo I ſhall have all that time to myſelf, and can get at what cloaths and linen I want. But, my dear ſiſter, what ſhall I do with this girl when I have married her? where muſt I carry her?

Betty. That is what I came to talk about. You muſt take a fine lodging for her, and order a handſome dinner to be provided at ſome tavern or other. Every thing muſt be done with a grand air, that ſhe may ſuſpect nothing till after you have conſummated. Hah, brother!

Capt. But, Betty, I have no money: all will go wrong ſtill if you cannot help me out.

Betty. Nothing would go right, if it were not for me: you may thank God for having ſuch a ſiſter; you might have been a foot-ſoldier elſe as long as you lived. But there is no time to be loſt. I have brought you four pieces, and I believe that will be ſufficient for every thing. Go and buy a ring, and ſecure a lodging, immediately.

Capt. You may be ſure I ſhall not fail. But harkye, Betty, take care ſhe brings the writings of her two thouſand pounds, and all her jewels.

Betty.

Betty. Aye, aye; she shall leave nothing of value behind her, I'll engage.

With these words they separated; and I went home, heartily glad that I had made this discovery, and determined to save Narcissa, if possible, from the misfortune she was so near falling into: to which end I sat down to my escritoire, and immediately wrote to her father in the following terms—

'TO JOHN ******, ESQ.

'SIR,

'THE shock I am now about to give 'you, can only be excused by 'it's being done to prevent you from re-'ceiving a much greater and more last-'ing one. Sorry am I to tell you, yet 'so it is, your daughter Narcissa is on 'the point of utter destruction; she has 'promised, and is resolved to keep her 'word to join herself in marriage with 'a wretch who, though of the most ab-'ject rank, in order to seduce her in-'nocence, assumes the character of a 'gentleman, and calls himself Captain 'Pike. Betty, her waiting-maid, is 'sister to the impostor, and has been the 'conductress of the whole villainous de-'sign. Every thing is prepared for the 'accomplishment, and to morrow is the 'day fixed, but I hope this intelligence 'will reach you time enough to pre-'vent so irremediable an evil. I am, 'Sir, your unknown well-wisher and 'humble servant.'

Having sent this away, and fully discharged what my honour and conscience represented as a duty, I flattered myself with the expectation of seeing, the next day, treachery and deceit receive the mortification they justly merited.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTAINS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE INVISIBLE SPY, WITH SOME OTHER SUBSEQUENT PARTICULARS.

THOUGH I had not the least room to doubt but that the information I had given the father of Narcissa would have all the success I wished, yet I could not avoid being extremely curious to see in what manner the persons concerned would behave on this occasion. Accordingly, I went to the house the next morning about eleven, expecting to find that the maid had been turned out of doors, the mistress in tears for her disappointment, and the old gentleman rejoicing in the thoughts of having saved his beloved daughter from undoing herself. A servant happening to be at the door, receiving some shoes from a fellow who had been just cleaning them, I gained an easy access. Finding nobody in the lower floor, I went up stairs; but the same solitude reigned likewise there. I then proceeded a story higher, and there saw only a servant-maid sweeping out a room, which, by a toilette being set out, I judged was the chamber of Narcissa. I was very much surprized to find every thing so quiet in a place where I looked for nothing but confusion, and stopped on the stairs to consider what might be the occasion; when, on a sudden, I heard the ringing of a small bell, and presently after saw a footman running hastily up. I followed him where he went, which was into the chamber of Narcissa's father, who was not yet up, but now called for his cloaths. As he was putting them on, he cast his eyes on the table, and seeing a letter lie there, asked his man when, and from whom, it came. To which he replied—'Sir, it was left for 'you last night by a porter; but as you 'came home so late, would not disturb 'you with it.'

I was astonished on finding that this was no other than the letter I had sent him; but more troubled that, by the delivery of it being delayed, poor Narcissa had fallen into the trap laid for her. But if I, a stranger, could be so much affected, what agony must rend the tender father's heart! Scarce had he gone through the half of what I wrote, before he cried out, casting, at the same time, a look full of despair and rage upon his servant—

Father. Ill-fated wretch! what mischief, what ruin, has thy neglect brought upon me and my family! You imagined I was drunk last night, I suppose; but had I been so, here is enough in this letter to have brought me to my senses. But go, run up to my daughter's chamber; see if she be there.

Footman.

Footman. Sir, she went out very early this morning with Mrs. Betty, and is not yet come back.

Father. Nor ever will, I fear. The intelligence this brings is too true, I find. Run to Mr. Oakly and my cousin Johnson's; bid them come this instant. Fly!—and, do you hear, bring a coach with you. If I can recover her before consummation, her ruin may be yet prevented.

The fellow went on his errand; and the old gentleman in the mean time stamping, biting his lips, and shewing all the marks of an inward distraction, made an end of putting on his cloaths, in order to go in search of his lost daughter, when the gentlemen he had sent for should arrive: but I staid not to hear what method would be pursued for that purpose, as thinking it of no moment, and that it would be better to return again in the evening, when I might probably hear what success had attended their endeavours. The time I chose for going was as late at night as I thought I might get an opportunity of entering, yet the disconsolate father was but just come home: his two friends were with him; they said all they could to alleviate his sorrows, but it availed no more than preaching to the winds. They had found out, it seems, where the marriage was performed: after which, they went to all the taverns, coffee-houses, and other publick places, which they heard were frequented by officers, to enquire concerning one who called himself Captain Pike, but could not receive the least information of any one who bore that name; and all the consolation the old gentleman had for the pains he had taken was, the cruel certainty that his dear daughter was inevitably undone.

Though I saw very little probability of my being able to learn any thing more at this house than I had already done, yet I could not forbear calling constantly there every day; and at last, by this dint of continued application, I became acquainted with the whole melancholy secret of Narcissa's fate almost as soon as the family knew it themselves. The pretended captain had managed every thing according to the direction of his sister. As soon as the ceremony was over, he had conducted his bride to very handsome lodgings, where an entertainment suitable to the occasion was provided; and the poor deluded young lady, seeing nothing but what served to make her satisfied with what she had done, in return for his imaginary generosity, made him a present of her two thousand pounds, which was in India bonds.

Her contentment might, perhaps, have lasted some little time longer than it did, if she had not proposed waiting on her father, to implore his forgiveness and blessing; on which the impostor, having now got his ends, thinking it needless to continue the deception any longer, confessed that he was no more than a private man in the army; but told her that he was now treating with his captain for his discharge, and would purchase a commission with some part of the money she had given him; and added, that till these two points were accomplished, it would be altogether improper to appear before her father.

Narcissa fell into the utmost distraction on this eclaircissement, vowed not to live with a wretch who had put so base a trick upon her, but would go home to her father, who she doubted not would find means to punish such a flagrant piece of villainy. He only laughed at her reproaches, and said, that as she was his wife, she had it not in her choice to leave him. Betty, also, now threw off the character of a servant, and assuming the authority of a sister, pretended to rebuke her idle prating, as she insolently termed it.

She found an opportunity, however, of making her escape, and fled for refuge to the house of a near relation; who, on hearing her story, undertook to intercede with her father; which he did so successfully, that the old gentleman forgave, and took her again into favour. All possible measures were taken to set aside the marriage, and compel the impostor to refund the money Narcissa had so unwarily bestowed upon him; but as he knew the law was too much on his side, having not married her in a false name, though under a false character, he carried things with a very high hand; would part with nothing, not even the jewels she had left behind; but even threatened to commence a process against any one who detained her person. In fine, all that could be done was to get him to sign articles of separation. After which Narcissa

Narciſſa retired into the country, where I hear ſhe reſolves to waſte the whole remainder of her days in a melancholy contrition for the raſhneſs of her ungoverned conduct.

I muſt not forget to let my readers know, that Marilla is ſince married to Mr. Oakly; with whom, as I am credibly informed, ſhe was long paſſionately in love; and on that motive uſed the utmoſt of her endeavours to ſtrengthen the averſion her fair friend had for him.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR FLATTERS HIMSELF WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE PRESENT TO ALL THOSE OF THE FAIR SEX, WHO ARE EITHER TRULY INNOCENT, OR WOULD PRESERVE THE REPUTATION OF BEING SO.

WHEN a young woman, of what rank or degree ſoever, indulges herſelf in a too great freedom of converſation with one of a looſe and wanton behaviour, ſhe cannot wonder that thoſe who are witneſſes of their intimacy ſhould ſuſpect her guilty of the ſame inclinations; and that, though perfectly innocent of the faults of her companion, is made an equal partaker of her ſhame. Women, who are either born to, or reduced by accidents, to low and indigent circumſtances, excuſe themſelves by ſaying, that the neceſſity of their affairs compels them to keep an acquaintance with perſons whom they find it their intereſt to oblige. But if this be an inſufficient pretence, as certainly it is, ſince there is no intereſt which ought to be put in competition with reputation, what can be alledged in behalf of ladies of fortune and quality, who have it in their power to chuſe their company, and it cannot be ſuppoſed would converſe with any whoſe manners they did not approve?

In fine, there is no one error in conduct, which, according to my opinion, the ſex in general ſhould be more upon their guard againſt than this; for though ſome, dazzled with the pomp of ſhew and equipage, may be weak enough to imagine, that to appear in publick, or to be known to have an intimacy with a woman of a polluted fame, provided ſhe be a perſon of condition, will bring no blemiſh on their own characters, nor be of any prejudice to their morals; yet that ſuch an intimacy is extremely dangerous to both, may be very eaſily demonſtrated.

As to character. If the world ſhould be more ſilent than it ever was, or ever will be on ſuch occaſions, it cannot be expected that a woman, who has thrown off all regard for her own honour, ſhould have any for that of the perſons ſhe converſes with, or would even wiſh they ſhould be thought poſſeſſed of a virtue ſhe is entirely deſtitute of herſelf. No; on the contrary, ſhe will rather have recourſe to all the wicked artifices ſhe may be miſtreſs of, to caſt a ſhade over that brightneſs which would render her own deformity more conſpicuous. But this

is not the worſt danger to which an innocent perſon is expoſed by keeping company with a bad woman. We are told, from an unqueſtionable authority, that it is hard to touch pitch without being defiled; and certainly there is nothing more evident, than that vice naturally loſes great part of it's horrors by becoming familiar to the ſight. The chaſte heart, which ſhudders at the bare repetition of indecent actions, by accuſtoming itſelf to be a witneſs of them, ceaſes firſt to wonder, and by degrees to deteſt them; and though I will not be ſo uncharitable as to ſay, that the mind is always corrupted by ſuch a communication, yet I will venture to affirm, that the manners will be ſo.

I know very well, that the timid modeſty I would recommend, as the ſureſt guardian of a virgin's honour, has for many years been exploded; and that ſince ſome foreign cuſtoms have unhappily been introduced among us, to be capable of bluſhing is looked upon, by thoſe who paſs for models of politeneſs, as an indication of the want both of wit and good-breeding. This audacity of behaviour being ſo much the mode, it is not a little difficult to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who really purſue the dictates of a licentious inclination, and thoſe who put on a ſhew of it, merely to comply with the example of others; and a perſon who judges of a woman by what he ſees of her in publick, runs a very great riſque of being miſtaken. Often has my opinion been led aſtray in this point, even in regard of ladies with whom I was moſt intimately acquainted, and ſaw every day; nor did I ever dare to give a character of any one of them, till my Belt of Inviſibility afforded me an opportunity of prying into the ſecrets of the alcove.

Coriſca and Emilia are two celebrated beauties. They are almoſt equally followed and admired by the men, but neither of them were ever jealous or envious of the praiſes given to the other; and there was once ſo exceſſive a fondneſs between them, that they were ſcarce ever ſeen aſunder. Coriſca has been married ſome years; Emilia has not yet been prevailed upon to part with her liberty: but though there is this difference in their circumſtances, there has been too much appearance upon exact ſimilitude in their humours and conſtitutions: I ſay in appearance, for I have ſince diſcovered that light and darkneſs are not, in fact, more widely diſtant.

Coriſca, long before ſhe became a wife, was looked upon as what they call a female rake. Some there were, however, who imputed what ſhe did only to the too great vivacity of her humour, and would not believe her guilty of any real crime; but far the greater number were of a quite different opinion: and, indeed, the little regard ſhe takes of her family ſince her marriage, the publick contempt with which ſhe treats her huſband, and the frequent quarrels ſhe has with him in private, but too much juſtify the worſt character that can be given either of her œconomy or her chaſtity. Yet, notwithſtanding all this, there is a certain ſomething in her air, her wit, and manner of behaviour, ſo engaging to both ſexes, that ſhe has always been, and ſtill continues to be, conſtantly viſited by perſons not only of the beſt fortunes, but of the beſt reputations; who chuſe rather to ſeem blind to her faults, than deny themſelves the pleaſure of her converſation. It is, beyond all diſpute, a very great pity, that a woman ſo plenteouſly endowed by nature with every qualification to ſhew virtue in it's moſt amiable colours, ſhould, through a ſtrange depravity of principles and inclination, make uſe of all the fine talents ſhe is miſtreſs of only to varniſh over the foul face of vice, and give a pleaſing aſpect to the deformity of ſin and ſhame.

The beautiful perſon of Emilia, her ſprightly wit, her good humour and affability, rendered her the darling of all who knew her. They beheld, with an infinity of concern, her intimacy with Coriſca; and thoſe who, either by proximity of blood, or a long acquaintance with her, thought themſelves privileged to offer their advice, did it in the ſtrongeſt terms, and ſpared no remonſtrances that might prevail on her to break off ſo dangerous a communication; but ſhe was deaf to all that could be ſaid to her on this ſubject. It was her misfortune to become the miſtreſs of her own actions at too early an age; what fortune ſhe was poſſeſſed of was in her own hands; and as ſhe was entirely independent on her friends, would not ſubmit to be directed by them.

In juſtice to this young lady's character, however, I muſt ſay, and ſhall hereafter

hereafter prove, that there is a fund of honour and virtue in her ſoul ſufficient to have made her look with contempt and deteſtation on the conduct of Coriſca; and to have obliged her, if not to break off all converſation with her, at leaſt not to appear with her in publick, or make one in any party of pleaſure where ſhe was engaged. But, alas! the ſeeds of thoſe noble principles for a time lay dormant in her; choaked up with the natural levities of youth, and the modiſh exceſſes of the age, they had not power to ſhoot forth into action. Innocently wanton, and indolently gay, ſhe ſaw not the danger to which ſhe expoſed her perſon and reputation, becauſe ſhe thought not of it, nor gave herſelf the pains to examine what ſnares might poſſibly be ſpread for her; but ſuffering herſelf to be continually hurried from one amuſement to another, never conſidered or reflected on any thing farther than the preſent ſatisfaction.

I have been thus particular in deſcribing the character and humour of Emilia, becauſe in the courſe of my rambles I have found too many others of the ſame giddy bent, who, without the leaſt propenſity to ill, have heedleſsly run into actions which have involved their whole future lives in diſhonour. Theſe have reaſon to pardon this digreſſion, eſpecially as it has not been tedious; and I ſhall now return to the adventure which occaſioned it.

Among the many Inviſible Viſits which for a conſiderable time together I had made to the apartment of this celebrated Coriſca, I happened to be there one morning when Favonius and Palamede were with her. The firſt of theſe gentlemen is of a very amorous inclination, and known to be what the world calls well with her; the other, though gay and lively as Mercury himſelf, has been reſtrained, either through want of inclination to her perſon, or his friendſhip to Favonius, from attempting to take any private liberties, and ſeldom viſits her but in his company. The diſcourſe they were engaged in, when I firſt broke in upon them, I found was on ſubjects of too trifling a nature for me to ſpread my Tablets for the reception of; ſo I ſhall make no repetition of any things which were ſaid till the entrance of Emilia, who came in ſoon after. The firſt ſalutations were no ſooner over, than Coriſca, taking her fondly by the hand, ſpoke thus—

Coriſca. Dear creature, this is an exceſs of goodneſs in you to come thus early; I did not expect you till dinner-time.

Emilia. Indeed, my dear, I never waited on you with ſo ill a will, nor came on an errand ſo diſagreeable to my inclination; for I have but juſt time to tell you, that I am deprived of the pleaſure I propoſed of paſſing the whole day with you.

Coriſca. On what occaſion?

Emilia. The moſt unlucky one that could have happened. An old aunt of mine has taken it into her head to quit her rookery and henhouſe in the country, and come to ſtare and be ſtared at in town. She arrived laſt night, and ſent me word ſhe muſt needs ſee me this morning: decency obliges me to go; ſhe is my godmother, and beſides is pretty rich.

Coriſca. But cannot you make ſome excuſe to leave her as ſoon as you have paid your compliments? I ſhall have all the world here this afternoon, and would not have you abſent upon any ſcore.

Emilia. It cannot be avoided. She pretends to have a huge fondneſs for me, and I know will detain me, with a thouſand impertinent declarations of it, till bed-time: ſo, my dear, adieu for this whole tedious day; to-morrow, I hope, will atone for this vexation.—Gentlemen, your ſervant.

In ſpeaking theſe laſt words, ſhe turned upon her heel, and ran out of the room; but not ſo haſtily but that Palamede, with one ſtride, joined her at the door, and led her down ſtairs. In the mean time Coriſca, looking on Favonius, ſaid to him—

Coriſca. I pity poor Emilia. The impertinent fondneſs of an old relation is almoſt as great a mortification as the ſaucy indifference of a young fellow one likes.

Favonius. The beautiful Coriſca, I am ſure, can never be in danger of experiencing the latter of theſe vexations.

To prove the ſincerity of this aſſertion, he cloſed it with a ſtrenuous embrace, which Coriſca returned. There was time for no more; Palamede came back; and Favonius, with a ſmile, ſpoke in this manner—

Favonius. By the ſparkle in your eyes, Palamede, I ſhould imagine the piece of gallantry you have ſhewed to Emilia has been more than ordinarily well received.

Palamede. This, and all others I have yet had in my power to treat that lady with, have been too trifling to deſerve much notice from her.

Favonius. Oh, every kind glance gives tranſport to a man in love!—You muſt know, Madam, I have juſt found out that Palamede is deſperately in love with Emilia.

Coriſca. Indeed!—And do you allow the charge, Palamede?

Palamede. Not altogether, Madam. I am not abſolutely in love; but confeſs I think Emilia an extremely fine girl, and have had ſome very odd dreams on her account.

Coriſca. What hinders you, then, from making your addreſſes to her?

Palamede. Why, faith, Madam, to confeſs the truth, I was afraid of not ſucceeding on the terms I wiſh'd to do; and as for marriage, the circumſtances of my eſtate require I ſhould make choice of a wife with a much larger fortune than Emilia is poſſeſſed of.

Favonius. You are perfectly in the right, Palamede. A good fortune with a wife is abſolutely neceſſary for a man of pleaſure, as it enables him to make handſome preſents and entertainments to thoſe women he may happen to like better.

Coriſca. So, Palamede, you durſt not aſk Emilia the queſtion, for fear of meeting with a rebuff from her over-ſcrupulous virtue?

Palamede. That is indeed the caſe, Madam.

Coriſca. Then you are a fool. Not but I believe Emilia is perfectly innocent as yet; but what is innocence, what is virtue, what is honour, when oppoſed to love and inclination! Do you not know what Mrs. Behn, who muſt be allowed to be a perfect judge of nature in our ſex, ſays upon this occaſion?

'Oh, curſed Honour! thou who firſt didſt
'damn
'A woman to the ſin of ſhame!
'Honour! who taught her lovely eyes the art
'To wound, and not to cure the heart;
'With love t'invite, but to forbid with
'awe,
'And to themſelves preſcribe a cruel law.
'His chief attributes are pride and ſpight,
'His pow'r is robbing lovers of delight.
'Honour! that puts our words, that ſhould
'be free,
'Into a ſet formality!
'Thou baſe debaucher of the gen'rous
'heart,
'That teacheſt all our looks and actions
'art.
'What Love deſign'd a ſacred gift,
'What Nature made to be poſſeſs'd,
'Miſtaken Honour made a theft.
'Thou foe to Pleaſure, Nature's worſt diſ-
'eaſe!
'Thou tyrant over mighty kings,
'Be gone to princes palaces,
'But let the humble ſwain go on,
'In the bleſt paths of the firſt race of man,
'That neareſt were to gods allied,
'And, form'd for love, diſdain'd all other
'pride.'

The emphatick accents and graceful manner with which Coriſca pronounced theſe lines adding to the beauty of the poetry, ſtruck ſo much upon the hearts of the two gentlemen, that they could not forbear clapping their hands, and crying out—'Encore, encore, charming 'Coriſca!' On which ſhe laughed heartily, and replied—

Coriſca. I want none of theſe theatrical teſtimonies of approbation; I would only convince Palamede, from the unqueſtionable authority of our Engliſh Sappho, that when a woman loves, no conſiderations are of force to reſtrain her from acting up to the dictates of her paſſion.

Palamede. Aye, Madam, if I could flatter myſelf with the hopes of being loved by Emilia, I ſhould have nothing to apprehend.

Coriſca. I will not pretend to tell you that ſhe is ſo much in love as not to be able to eat, drink, or ſleep, for the thoughts of you; but I have heard her ſay a thouſand times over, I believe, that you are, without exception, the prettieſt fellow in the whole town; that you dreſs the beſt, and have ſomething peculiarly agreeable in your air and manner of behaviour: and on the ſtrength of this, and ſome other indications I have obſerved about her, I dare venture to affirm that you are far from being indifferent to her, and that ſhe would be little leſs pleaſed than yourſelf with an opportunity of being entertained by you in private.

Palamede. Dear Madam, you make me the moſt tranſported man alive! But by

by what means can such a thing be brought about? Some scheme must be laid for that purpose.

Corisca. Nothing more easy; I have it all in my head already; she will go any where with me; we shall be together to-morrow; you two shall come in as if by accident, and propose going to take the air on the other side of the water: there is a house the most commodiously situated that can be; good gardens, good wine, good every thing.—Favonius is well acquainted with the place.

Favonius. I suppose you mean that kept by Mrs. *******?

Corisca. The same. When we have been there some time, and it begins to draw near the hour proper to think of going home, you shall discharge the coach, and pretend the fellow got drunk and went away without your knowledge. There will be no possibility of procuring a vehicle to bring us to town, especially at night. Favonius must be content to do penance with me in loitering about the gardens, or in something or other, till morning, while you make the most of your time with Emilia.

Palamede. Excellent, my charming Machiavel! But how shall we prevail on Emilia to be separated from her dear Corisca?

Corisca. Leave that to my management; she shall suspect nothing of the matter, till she finds herself alone with you, and then it will be your business to make her satisfied with being so.

Palamede. Kind creature! where shall I find words to thank this compassion to a suffering lover?

Corisca. Never trouble yourself about thanks; good actions, they say, reward themselves.

Favonius. As for my part, I shall defer those acknowledgments which your excess of goodness demands from me, both on my own score and that of my friend, till to-morrow night, when they shall make part of that agreeable penance I am to perform.

This speech of Favonius paved the way for a conversation conformable enough to the characters of the persons engaged in it; but I am certain would not be well relished by that part of my readers which I am most ambitious of obliging: I shall therefore close the scene, as indeed I did soon after my Tablets, and quitted the apartments of this fair libertine, in order to retire to my own, and contemplate at leisure on what I had seen and heard.

CHAP. II.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH THE CATASTROPHE OF AN ADVENTURE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE BEGINNING MAY HAVE GIVEN HIM REASON TO EXPECT.

THOUGH I had thought myself too well acquainted with the principles and inclination of Corisca, to be at all surprized at any act of licentiousness she could possibly be guilty of, yet I could not defend my senses from being seized with the extremest shock, on finding she could be base enough to condescend to become the instrument of others pleasures, and betray the innocence of a young lady for whom she had as much friendship as is consistent with a woman of her character—forgetting all this while what the good old poet, Mr. Philip Massenger, tells us on an occasion similar to this of Corisca and Emilia—

> 'Virtue and Vice in one sole point agree,
> 'Each would be glad all like themselves might
> 'be.

In ruminating very wisely, as I then imagined, on what Corisca had said to Palamede, I must confess I entertained suspicions not at all to the advantage of poor Emilia: I fancied that she had in reality confessed a passion for that gentleman; and Corisca, in forming this contrivance to bring about a private interview between them, had done nothing but what she was convinced in her own mind would be highly satisfactory to her fair friend. It was never my custom, however, to place an entire dependance on conjecture, whether my own or that of another person; so resolved to be as convinced as my Invisible inspection could make me. Accordingly the next day, in the afternoon, I girded on my precious Belt, and went to the house of Corisca. Emilia was not yet come; but just as I arrived I heard her give orders to refuse admittance to all of her own sex except that lady, and also to all those of the other except Favonius and Palamede.

As

As I doubted not but I ſhould be able to fathom the whole truth of this affair, by the converſation that would paſs between theſe two ladies while they believed themſelves alone together, I was extremely impatient for the approach of Emilia, and equally rejoiced when I ſaw her enter. The firſt ſalutations they gave each other, were ſuch as might be expected from perſons who mutually profeſſed ſo warm and tender a friendſhip. The ſubjects they afterwards talked upon were not of any conſequence; not one word of Palemede nor the projected tour was mentioned; on which I abſolved Emilia from all blame on this account, and was ſorry I had ever wronged her. But the leſs room I had to condemn, the greater cauſe I had to pity her, and to deteſt the cruel plot contrived, and ſo near being put in execution againſt her virtue. But I had no time to indulge meditation; the gentlemen preſently came in; the propoſal, as agreed upon between them and Coriſca, was immediately made; the ladies gave a ready aſſent; a hackney-coach was ordered to be called, and every one ſeemed equally on the wing to be gone.

The reader will now perhaps imagine, that it being eaſy to ſee into the end of this affair, there was no occaſion for any farther enquiries in relation to it, and that curioſity had received it's utmoſt gratification; but I happened to be of a different way of thinking. I ſincerely pitied Emilia, and could not help being deſirous to ſee how ſhe would reſent the baſe artifice practiſed on her when ſhe ſhould diſcover it, and alſo how Coriſca would conduct the plot ſhe had contrived. It was no difficult matter for me to know the houſe they were going to, both by the deſcription I had heard given of it the day before by Coriſca, and alſo by what I had been told by other people concerning it's commodiouſneſs for intrigue; ſo I no ſooner found that a hackney-coach was ordered, than I haſtily quitted the poſt I was in, made the beſt of my way to the place of rendezvous, got there before them, took up my ſtand at the entrance, ſaw them alight, and followed them into a well-furniſhed ſpacious room, to which they were uſhered by a ſpruce waiter.

Wine and biſcuits were immediately ſerved up; and the company, after having refreſhed themſelves with this little regale, went to walk in the gardens, which I found indeed very pleaſant, well laid out into parterres and knots, and larger than I could have imagined. Favonius led Coriſca, and Palamede had Emilia by the hand, who, during this promenade, took the opportunity of entertaining her with many tender ſpeeches, but intermixed with nothing that the moſt chaſte ear might not have liſtened to without calling a bluſh upon the face. I was ſorry, however, to obſerve that ſhe received what he ſaid with a certain languiſhment in her eyes, which emboldened him to go on, and made me fear that he had indeed a ſecret aſcendancy over her incautious, unſuſpecting heart.

On their return into the houſe, a table was ſpread with every thing that could excite the appetite or exhilarate the ſpirits. The chearfulneſs and good humour of the gueſts gave a double reliſh to the repaſt; wit and ſparkling Champagne crowned the board; and though the ladies allayed the too great potency of the one by the aſſiſtance of water, yet the other flowed with no leſs ſtrength and vigour. After ſome hours had been paſſed in the height of gaiety, Coriſca on a ſudden looked upon her watch, and aſſuming a more ſerious air than ſhe was accuſtomed to wear, told the company that it was near one o'clock, and they muſt think of departing for London. To which Favonius replied—

Favonius. Among all the ridiculous things mankind was ever guilty of, I know none more ſo than the having ſet their wits to work to invent a machine, and then ſubmitting to be governed by it.

Coriſca. There are many other laws, as well as this, by which the ſilly world have bound themſelves to go contrary to the primitive rules of nature and inclination, indulging by ſtealth only thoſe pleaſures which they were born freely to enjoy: but, however, all theſe cuſtoms, diſagreeable as they are to people of real wit and ſpirit, muſt in ſome meaſure be complied with, or the ſtupid vulgar would preſently accuſe us of irregularity and indecency.

Palamede. I look upon every one here, Madam, to be above the cenſures of the vulgar, yet I will not pretend to enter into any arguments on that head; and dare anſwer for Favonius, as well as for myſelf, that he would not preſume to detain you a moment beyond the time you think proper to go.

Emilia.

Emilia. Indeed, gentlemen, I think, and I believe Coriſca does ſo too, that to ſtay any longer at this time would rather diminiſh than add to the ſatisfaction we have hitherto enjoyed.

Favonius. After ſuch a declaration, Madam, any farther preſſures to the contrary on our part, might juſtly be looked upon as impertinent and troubleſome; it is certainly your province to command, ours implicitly to obey.

In ſpeaking theſe laſt words, he went out of the room with Palamede, as it might be ſuppoſed to diſcharge the reckoning of the houſe; but in a few minutes returned, and, with a ſeeming concern in their faces, ſaid, that the coachman, either by having got drunk or miſtaking his orders, had gone away ſoon after he had ſet them down: on which Coriſca affected to be extremely ſurprized, and Emilia being really ſo, they both cried out at the ſame time—

Coriſca. This is the oddeſt accident ſure that ever happened!

Emilia. Bleſs me! which way ſhall we get home?

Palamede. As for going home, Madam, it is a thing quite out of the queſtion: we have enquired, and there is no poſſibility of procuring either coach, chariot, poſt-chaiſe, or any ſort of carriage whatever, till the morning breaks; ſo, ladies, you muſt content yourſelves with being our gueſts for the remainder of the night.

Coriſca. Well, ſince it is ſo, we muſt e'en make a virtue of neceſſity, and divert ourſelves as well as we can.

Palamede. It would be an unpardonable vanity in us, Madam, to imagine that any thing in our converſation could compenſate for the want of your repoſe; we will therefore order a bed to be got ready for you two ladies, while Favonius and myſelf watch the approach of day, in order to provide a vehicle for carrying us to town.

Coriſca. No, no, by no means, we will all ſhare the ſame fate; it would be ſtrange indeed, if four people of taſte and ſpirit could not find ſome way to amuſe each other for the ſpace of one night.

While ſhe was ſpeaking, a concert of flutes, a hautboy, a double curtal, and ſome other wind-muſick, on a ſudden ſaluted their ears; on which ſhe cried out—

Coriſca. Hark! muſick! if it continues, it will very well atone for the loſs of a few hours ſleep.

Emilia. Nothing ever happened ſo fortunately for me; I love muſick as I love my life, eſpecially of this ſort.

In ſpeaking this, ſhe ran haſtily to the window and threw up the ſaſh, in order to hear the ſeveral inſtruments more diſtinctly. Palamede followed, and they both ſeemed abſorbed in a moſt profound attention; which Favonius and Coriſca obſerving, took that opportunity of paſſing ſoftly behind them, and ſlipped out of the room. Emilia turning her head preſently after, with a deſign, as I ſuppoſe, to ſay ſomething either to the one or the other, was ſurprized at ſeeing neither of them there, and cried out to Palamede—

Emilia. Bleſs me! what is become of Favonius and Coriſca?

Palamede. I know not, Madam; perhaps they are gone down into the garden, to be nearer to the muſick, which ſeems to proceed from the lower end of the walk.

Emilia. Very likely; they might have told us, however; but ſince it is ſo, we will follow them.

Palamede. With all my heart, Madam; but firſt permit me to reveal a ſecret to you which you ought to be told, and my breaſt has long laboured with an impatience of diſcovering.

Emilia. A ſecret! What ſecret can you have with me, that would be worth loſing one note of this muſick to liſten to?

Palamede. I hope you will be of another opinion, Madam, when I ſhall tell you that the whole happineſs of my future life, and even my ſoul's eternal peace, depends upon it.

Emilia. You may tell me what you will, but I ſhall believe nothing of the matter; ſo let us rejoin our friends.

It is not ſo much by what people ſay, as by the manner in which they deliver themſelves, that the ſincerity of their words may be gueſſed at; and I was heartily glad to find, both by the looks of Emilia and the tone of her voice, that ſhe indeed had more inclination to do as ſhe had propoſed, than to ſtay and ſuffer herſelf to be entertained by Palamede in the way ſhe might eaſily perceive he was about to do it. The diſcreet intentions of this young lady, however, could avail her but little in her preſent ſituation; Palamede got between her and the door as ſhe was endeavouring to go out, and throwing himſelf upon his knees before her, and at the ſame time catching faſt hold of both her hands, ſaid to her—

Palamede.

Palamede. No, charming Emilia! I have not so long languished for an opportunity like this to let it now escape me! you must, you shall hear me. By Heaven I love you!—love you to the most raging height the passion can inspire! For many, many tedious weeks, you have been the only object of my nightly visions and waking thoughts; and——

He was going on, but Emilia interrupted him by replying in these terms, accompanied with an air full of resentment and confusion—

Emilia. Fye, Palamede, this raillery is impertinent and insipid, and what I could not have expected to be treated with by a person who has the character of good sense and breeding.

Palamede. Cruelly urged! Oh, could you see into my heart, you would find it all devoted to you! devoted to you with a tenderness so perfect as can be equalled by nothing but the charms that have subdued it. Frown not, adorable Emilia, nor struggle to get loose; for, by all my hopes, never will I quit the grasp I have taken of you nor rise from the posture I am in, till I have convinced you of the sincerity, as well as ardency, of the flame you have kindled in me!

Emilia. Sir, this nocturnal declaration is little consistent with that respect which is always the attendant of an honourable passion. If you had, indeed, any thoughts of me of the nature you pretend, I am no recluse, and you might have found a more proper season to acquaint me with them.

Palamede. The passion I am enflamed with, is not of a nature to submit to the dull forms observed by vulgar lovers. Besides, what season can be more fit for love than night, the friend of love? Turn your eyes towards the window, and behold the silver moon, with all the thousand twinkling stars! see how sweet, how mild they shine! with what benevolent aspects they dart their rays upon us! Listen to the melodious sounds you just now praised! Will not all these soften your soul, melt you into pity, and make you think such love as mine deserves some recompence?

Emilia. I'll hear no more; unhand me, Sir, and give me liberty to seek our friends; or be assured my cries shall raise the house.

He then let go her hands, and rose from the posture he had been in; but still kept his back close against the door, while with half a smile he replied to what she had said in this manner—

Palamede. Madam, you are obeyed in part; and if I acquiesce to every thing you demand, it is not to be imagined you would be one jot less in my power than now. Our friends are too deeply engaged with each other to suffer themselves to be interrupted; and as to the people of the house, they know their distance, and are always extremely deaf on these occasions.

On hearing him speak thus, she burst into a flood of tears, and throwing herself into a chair, cried out—

Emilia. O Heavens! is this possible! Can Corisca be so vile! Am I betrayed! basely given up by her to infamy and ruin!

On hearing her make this exclamation, he left the place where he had been standing, and seated himself near her; then taking one of her hands, and pressing it tenderly to his lips, spoke to this effect—

Palamede. Not so, my angel! By Heaven, the transactions of this night shall be for ever a sacred and inviolable secret! not even Favonius nor Corisca shall be acquainted with it if you desire the contrary: I know they will laugh at me; but no matter, I can bear all that, and much more, to comply with the least request made by my dear Emilia. O, then, be kind, and bless my longing wishes! let no reluctance damp the coming joys, but yield to share the happiness you give!

The consternation of Emilia, on finding she was exposed to the danger she now was in, by the very woman whom she most had loved, and most believed her friend, had thrown her into so profound a reverie, that I much question whether she heard any part of what Palamede had lately been speaking to her; till closing his protestations with a strenuous embrace, she started up, broke from him, and looking wildly round the room, she espied two swords, which Favonius and Palamede had plucked off on their entrance, and put in a window; she snatched up one of them, and drawing it out of the scabbard in an instant, held the point to her breast, saying at the same time—

Emilia. Here is at least a refuge from dishonour! That base woman, who thought to make me as vile as I now find she is herself, shall meet with a disappointment she perhaps does not expect.

If

If you offer to approach me, or advance one ſtep beyond the ſpot you ſtand upon, this goes into my heart.

The amazement, the ſhock, the confuſion Palamede was in at this action, is altogether impoſſible to deſcribe; her words, her looks, her voice, convincing him ſhe was indeed in earneſt, he remained ſpeechleſs, without motion, his eyes fixed on her in a kind of ſtupid ſtare, and ſeemed like one transfixed with thunder; at length, recovering himſelf a little, he ſaid to her in a faultering voice—

Palamede. For Heaven's ſake, Madam, wound not thus my ſoul by the ſight of your deſpair! You have no cauſe. It is certain that I long have loved you, but never had a thought of ſeducing your innocence. The plot to bring you hither was not of my contriving. 'Tis true I came into it, as where is the man who would not? But be aſſured I am no raviſher, nor capable of owing my pleaſure to brutal violence: Oh, therefore, throw aſide that cruel weapon, or turn the point on me, and if I make the leaſt attempt to offend your modeſty, bury it to the hilt within my boſom.

Emilia. Sir, I once looked upon you as a man of honour, and ſhould rejoice to find you could redeem yourſelf in my opinion.

Palamede. By all that's ſacred, not the utmoſt gratification of my looſeſt wiſhes could have given me half the joy as now, to prove myſelf not wholly unworthy the eſteem of ſuch exalted virtue. Charming Emilia! perfect in mind as well as form! in both angelic! behold me your convert! The love I had for you is now rarified into adoration! Your virtue, like chemiſts gold, turns all into itſelf, and leaves no groſſer particles behind! Forgive what is paſt, and never —never more will I preſume to entertain you with diſcourſes leſs chaſte and pure than your own virgin thoughts!

Emilia. May I believe this penitence ſincere?

Palamede. You may, by Heaven! and when I relapſe into my former crime, may infamy, diſeaſes, the contempt of the whole world, your eternal hatred, and every other curſe, fall on me!

Emilia. Then find ſome way, if poſſible, to take me immediately from this place, and conduct me ſafe to my own apartment.

Palamede. My readineſs to obey you, Madam, I hope, will prove the integrity of my preſent intentions, and be ſome atonement for the paſt. It is my happineſs to have it in my power to do what you require with much more eaſe than you imagine; you ſhall no longer, beautiful Emilia! be impoſed upon: the coachman, whom we pretended had left us, has only put up at an inn not above forty yards diſtant from this houſe; I ſuppoſe he may be gone to bed by this time, as we told him we ſhould not return to London till the morning; but I will ſend and have him rouzed.

He had ſcarce made an end of ſpeaking theſe words, when he rang the bell, and a waiter coming preſently up, he gave him the neceſſary orders for fulfilling the promiſe he had juſt given to Emilia; on which that young lady, with the utmoſt ſatisfaction in her voice and eyes, cried out—'This is truly honourable indeed, 'and worthy of yourſelf.'

Something which that inſtant ſtarted into the mind of Palamede, hindered him from making any anſwer, or even, perhaps, from hearing what ſhe ſaid: he rang the bell a ſecond time with all his force, and called for pen, ink and paper; which being brought, he told Emilia that decency and good manners would not ſuffer him to depart without taking ſome notice of the occaſion to Favonius, with whom he had always lived in a perfect good underſtanding, and therefore entreated her permiſſion to write a few lines to that gentleman. The requeſt was too reaſonable not to be complied with, and he ſat down and dictated the following epiſtle—

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'THINGS have happened very dif-
'ferently from what I was made to
'expect in regard to Emilia: in fine,
'ſhe is not a woman, but an angel! As
'ſuch I ſhall always eſteem her, and
'think it my glory to obey every com-
'mand ſhe is pleaſed to lay upon me:
'the firſt ſhe has honoured me with, is
'to remove her hence, and conduct her
'to her own apartment, which I am juſt
'now about to do. I have no opportu-
'nity to diſcharge the muſick or the
'expences of the houſe, ſo beg you will
'take the whole upon you, and meet
'me to-morrow evening at Braund's,
'where we will ſup together, and ſettle
'that affair. Make what compliments

'and excuſes you ſhall think proper for 'me to Coriſca; and believe me, yours, 'Sc.

'PALAMEDE.'

While Palamede was thus employed, it alſo came into Emilia's head to let Coriſca know ſome part of the reſentment ſhe had conceived againſt her: accordingly ſhe took another pen out of the ſtandiſh, and expreſſed herſelf in theſe terms—

'MADAM,

'WHAT the united report of all 'who know you could never have 'made me believe, your behaviour this 'night has not only convinced me of, 'but alſo that the tongue of malice can 'find nothing wherewith to aggravate 'your real guilt. Was it not enough, 'O moſt ungenerous woman! to ſink 'your own honour and reputation in 'eternal infamy, but you muſt alſo endeavour to drag others into perdition 'with you! Know, to your confuſion, that I happily eſcaped the ſnare 'you had laid for me; and ſhall reap 'this benefit by my late danger, as to 'avoid the company of a perſon whom 'to preſerve an acquaintance with muſt 'in the end have been the ruin of my 'character, if not of my virtue; for, be aſſured, I ſhall henceforward be as careful to ſhun your preſence, as ever 'I was eager to come into it. Here 'ceaſes all farther intercourſe between 'us. May the diſappointment of your baſe deſigns on me, ſerve as a warning to you not to attempt the like on 'any other equally inadvertent and incautious as the much deceived

'EMILIA.'

They had juſt finiſhed, and made up the above billets, when the waiter returned, and told Palamede that he had, though not without ſome difficulty, prevailed on the coachman to riſe; and that, before he left the inn, he had ſeen him go into the ſtable to bring out the horſes. Palamede then gave him the letter he had wrote to Favonius, ſaying —'Be ſure you deliver this to the gentleman who came with us as ſoon as he 'ſhall be ſtirring, and let him know I 'ſhall ſend the coach back in the morning.' Emilia alſo put into his hands her epiſtle to Coriſca, with theſe words—'And let the lady know I left this for 'her.' The fellow replied, that they might depend he would be punctual in diſcharging the commiſſion they entruſted him with, and then withdrew.

Finding my Cryſtalline Tablets were now overcharged, I was obliged to ſhut them up; ſo can relate no farther particulars of what converſation paſſed between Palamede and Emilia during the ſmall time they waited for the coach to carry them away; and can only ſay in general, that the greateſt reſerve and diſtance was obſerved on both ſides. Emilia, though now perfectly ſatisfied with the contrition of Palamede, thought it would be imprudent to appear too gay; and Palamede, fearful to renew her apprehenſions, behaved to her with all the ſolemnity of a Chineſe mandarin.

On their going down, they were met at the bottom of the ſtairs by the woman who kept this tavern, or rather brothel; who uſhering in what ſhe had to ſay with a low curtſey, told Emilia, that ſhe flattered herſelf with the expectation of her ſleeping there that night, and hoped nothing diſagreeable had happened to occaſion her departure at ſo unſeaſonable an hour; adding, that ſhe ſhould never forgive herſelf if any thing in her houſe had diſobliged ſo ſweet a young lady. Emilia anſwered this fawning ſpeech only with a look of contempt; but Palamede told her ſhe need be under no concern on that ſcore; the lady had no objections to her houſe, but choſe never to ſleep out of her own apartment. No more was ſaid; they went into the coach, and I followed on foot; for I had not curioſity enough to make me ſtay the remainder of the night in that place, for no other purpoſe than to ſee how Favonius and Coriſca would behave on being told that Palamede and Emilia were gone, and receiving the epiſtles that gentleman and lady had left for them. I had a long walk home, but my Inviſibility ſecured me from the danger of any inſults; and the ſatisfaction that roſe in my mind, on the noble conqueſt virtue had gained over vice, made the way ſeem much leſs tedious.

A few days after I was informed, by the report of the town, that Palamede made his publick addreſſes to Emilia. Being willing to be better convinced of the truth of this matter, I made ſeveral viſits to Emilia's apartment, and found that in fact the thing was as I had been told.

told. Palamede, who really loved Emilia much more than perhaps he was sensible of himself, before this proof she had given him of her virtue, got over that objection which the scantiness of her fortune had before laid in his way; and Emilia, who had liked him as much as Corisca had said she did, gave all the encouragement he could wish to his honourable passion. I look upon the affair to be now in a manner concluded on, and that a very short time will consummate their mutual wishes; a catastrophe which I doubt not but every generous reader will heartily rejoice at as well as myself.

Favonius, who is in reality a man of strict honour and good principles, though somewhat too sanguine in his amours, still continues his intimacy with Palamede, and highly applauds his conversion in favour of the fair inspirer of his honourable flame. Corisca bites her lips whenever the name of Emilia is mentioned, and endeavours all she can to traduce that virtue which she had not the power to destroy: but all she says on that score serves only to shew more plainly her own bad heart; and Emilia, by refraining all conversation with her, has entirely regained that esteem and good opinion which she had well nigh lost.

CHAP. III.

CONTAINS THE REHEARSAL OF A CONVERSATION WHICH THE AUTHOR ACCIDENTALLY HAPPENED TO BE WITNESS OF, AND LOOKS UPON HIMSELF AS BOUND BY AN INDISPENSABLE OBLIGATION TO MAKE PUBLICK; THOUGH PERFECTLY CONSCIOUS, FROM HIS OBSERVATIONS OF MANKIND, THAT THERE ARE MANY OF HIS READERS WHO WILL LABOUR ALL THEY CAN TO BRING THESE PAGES INTO DISCREDIT.

ONE whom I shall always rank among the number of our best English authors, tells us, in a justly esteemed poem, that—

'Wisdom is still to sloth too great a slave;
'None are so busy as the fool and knave.'

How widely different are the pictures drawn of a person whose prudence makes him act and talk with circumspection and reserve! How various are the representations made of him! He has almost as many characters as there are speakers of him; by the abundance one hears of him the judgment is distracted, and there is no forming a right idea of what he truly is. One can go into no company without hearing some mention made of Lord Honorius, yet one shall seldom find any two people agree in their opinion concerning him, either as to his abilities or principles, whether in religious, moral, or political matters. He is no follower of the court, yet does not totally avoid going thither. He professes himself a member of the established church, yet converses freely with those of different persuasions. He listens attentively to the arguments urged by persons of all parties and all sects, without offering any of his own, or giving his opinion which are wrong or which are right.

For this reason all the zealots, both in religion and politicks, brand him with lukewarmness, and say he is a man of an uncertain way of thinking, and has no settled principle of acting. Some few there are who applaud his moderation, but many more who look upon it as a piece of low cunning, thereby to cover some latent designs he has within his bosom; but of what nature these are, I have heard many warm disputes about. Some will needs have him in the interest of the Pretender, and others that he is secretly a tool of the ministry. Some have confidently averred, that they have seen a white rose carried into his house on the tenth of June; and others, that he has worn a yellow waistcoat on the birth-day of his present Majesty; as if an innocent flower, or the colour of a piece of silk, were sufficient tokens to shew the wishes of the wearer's heart.

As to his œconomy in private life, he is not at all expensive in dress, equipage, or the furniture of his house; chusing rather to appear below his rank, than in any particular to exceed it. This is frequently attributed to his covetousness, while more favourable judges suppose it to be owing to his contempt of the modish fopperies of the age. He partakes of all the pleasures of the town, but never pursues them to an excess, or with eagerness. The graver sort of people ascribe this to his discretion, and the more gay to want of spirit and coldness of constitution.

Thus apt are we to form a vain judgment on things we know nothing of. The heart of man is incomprehenſible, unleſs diſcovered by himſelf in ſome glaring proof either of virtue or vice: he firſt he may not have an opportunity to ſet forth in any conſpicuous light, and the latter he may have artifice and hypocriſy enough to gloſs over and conceal. How impoſſible, then, is it to be certain to which of theſe he is in reality devoted!

Among the variety of deſcriptions and reports in relation to Lord Honorius, I found, notwithſtanding, that it was agreed on by all hands, that though he would not ſuffer himſelf to be impoſed upon by his tradeſmen, yet he always took care their bills ſhould be paid with the utmoſt exactneſs and punctuality, and that he never dealt with foreigners. Theſe articles, however inſignificant they may ſeem to ſome of thoſe who call themſelves the polite world, I confeſs gave me ſuch an idea both of his prudence and juſtice, as made me immediately join with thoſe who ſpoke the greateſt things in his praiſe in other reſpects; but being deſirous of penetrating more deeply into the reality of this nobleman's diſpoſition, I reſolved to try how my Inviſibility ſhip would ſerve that end, and accordingly made a viſit one morning at his houſe.

I paſſed through ſeveral neat rooms, the furniture of which was rich, and befitting the dignity and fortune of the owner, but had nothing of gaudineſs in it. At laſt I found the perſon I went to ſeek; he was in a cloſet within his dreſſing-room, and had a book in his hand. I was curious to ſee what was the ſubject of his meditations; and, looking over his ſhoulder, perceived it was the poems of our Engliſh Pindar, the celebrated Mr. Cowley. The page he was employed in on my entrance contained, among others, theſe lines—

'O fountains! when in you ſhall I,
'Eas'd of unpeaceful thoughts, myſelf eſpy!
'O fields! O woods! when ſhall I be made
'The happy tenant of your ſhade!
'Here's the ſpring-head of pleaſure's flood,
'Where all the riches lie,
'That ſhe has coin'd and ſtamp'd for good,
'To charm the mind as well as eye.
'Pride and ambition here,
'Only in far-fetch'd metaphors appear;
'Here's nought but winds can hurtful murmurs ſcatter,
'And nought but echo flatter.
'The gods, when they deſcended hither
'From heaven, did always chuſe their way;
'And therefore we may boldly ſay,
"That is the way, too, thither."

When he came to this part of the poem, he ſtopped, and cried out with the greateſt emphaſis—'Charming, inimitable Cowley! how juſt, how truly delicate, are 'all thy notions, and how widely different from thoſe of the age I have the 'misfortune to live in! If one may 'form a judgment, as ſure one may, by 'the writings of ſeventy or eighty years 'ago, the genius of Britain was far unlike what it appears at preſent.'

He had ſcarce finiſhed this exclamation, when a ſervant opened the door, and told him that Sir Whimſey Brainſick was come to wait upon him; on which he laid aſide the book, and went into the next chamber to receive his gueſt. After giving and returning the cuſtomary ſalutations of the morning, and having ſeated themſelves, the following dialogue enſued between them—

Honorius. It is a wonder to ſee you dreſſed and abroad thus early, Sir Whimſey; I think you are commonly in your firſt ſleep after this time.

Sir Whimſey. Aye, my lord; but pleaſure muſt on ſome occaſions give way to buſineſs. I have vaſt affairs upon my hands at preſent. I only ſnatched a moment to take leave of your lordſhip, and two hours hence ſhall ſet out for the country.

Honorius. On your election, I ſuppoſe?

Sir Whimſey. No, no; my Lord Triffli Traffli has ſecured me a borough, without my taking the trouble of ever going near it. My buſineſs, at preſent, is down at *******, where I have a conſiderable eſtate, and, I believe, a pretty good intereſt; and I have engaged myſelf to ſtrain both, as far as they will go, in favour of Sir Crafty Shallowbuggen.

Honorius. Sir Crafty Shallowbuggen! What, then, has Mr. Worthy, the preſent member, declined ſtanding?

Sir Whimſey. No, no, my lord, he has not declined; but we are reſolved to have him out, at any rate.

Honorius. I would not have you deceive yourſelf, Sir Whimſey. Mr. Worthy is a gentleman who, I am told, is highly eſteemed by his conſtituents; and you may be at a great deal of expence to oppoſe him, to no purpoſe.

Sir Whimſey.

Sir Whimſey. As to the expence, I don't doubt but it will be made up to me ſome way or other. I have my eye upon a place; and, I can tell you, am as good as promiſed either that or a ribband.

Honorius. The character I have heard of Mr. Worthy makes me ſorry ſo powerful an oppoſition ſhould be ſet on foot againſt him.

Sir Whimſey. He has been ſtubborn, my lord, very ſtubborn; has voted againſt the Jew and Clandeſtine Marriage bills; and it is not fit the miniſtry ſhould be affronted. Your lordſhip, I ſuppoſe, is a friend to the miniſtry?

Honorius. Sir, I never gave any man reaſon to believe I was the contrary.

Sir Whimſey. No, no, your lordſhip is too wiſe. Thoſe who are friends to the miniſtry, are friends to themſelves. For my own part, if it were not to oblige them, I would not give two-pence who had the election at ******, or any where elſe. But I muſt beg your lordſhip's pardon; I have a thouſand things to diſpatch, and would not be waited for by four or five gentlemen who accompany me on the ſame expedition; ſo your lordſhip's moſt obedient.

Honorius. Yours, Sir Whimſey. I wiſh you a good journey.

With theſe words they parted. Lord Honorius ſaw him to the top of the ſtaircaſe, and then turned back to his cloſet, ſaying to himſelf as he went—'What 'a wild world is this! How do men 'toil to bring infamy on themſelves, 'and entail certain ruin on their poſte'rity!'

As I thought, by the little ſample I had ſeen, that it was now in my power to make a better judgment of the ſentiments of this nobleman than by all I had heard from others, I was following Sir Whimſey down ſtairs; but on hearing ſome debate between a plain, honeſt-looking countryman, and a ſpruce footman, who, as I found afterwards, had been but lately taken into my lord's ſervice, I ſtepped ſhort to liſten to the occaſion. I ſoon perceived that the countryman was deſirous of ſpeaking to his lordſhip; and the fellow, judging by appearances, thought it too great a preſumption, and would fain have turned him from the door; but the ruſtick was not ſo eaſily repulſed as the other had imagined. The firſt words I could hear diſtinctly were as follow—

Footman. I tell you, friend, I know not whether my lord is at home or not; or, if he is, whether he pleaſes to be ſeen: but if you let me know what buſineſs you have with him, and from whom you came, I will take care his lordſhip ſhall be informed, and you may have your anſwer to-morrow.

Countryman. Goodlack, Mr. Skip-jack, who are you? My lord is not uſed to have ſuch malapert fellows about him. But if I muſt not ſee my lord, pray let me ſpeak to Mr. Downright, the gentleman that dreſſes and waits upon him; he knows me well enough, and will give me a better anſwer.

The footman then vouchſafed to call the perſon he mentioned, and the countryman had the ſatisfaction to find himſelf well received. Mr. Downright ſhook him cordially by the hand, told him he was glad to ſee him in London, and aſked him what buſineſs had brought him hither. To which the other replied—

Countryman. In good troth I did not come upon pleaſure; I have buſineſs, very great buſineſs, with my lord, and would fain ſpeak to him, if ſo be I may have liberty to come into his preſence, as you know, Mr. Downright, I have done many a good time in the country; but that Mr. Finikin there, with his pig-tail wig, ſtands as it were like a mud-wall to keep every body off the houſe.

Mr. Downright. Oh, he did not know you, Mr. Goodacre; and beſides, he has lived in families where nobody without a coach or chair is admitted. But I will acquaint my lord you are here; he is alone, and I am ſure will ſee you.

Countryman. Thank you, Mr. Downright. It is well there are ſome civil people in this ſame town.

Mr. Downright then went on his meſſage: the footman looked very ſheepiſh, and ſneaked away; while the countryman ſtrutted about the hall as great as an emperor, till the valet returned, and deſired him to walk up. As I took Mr. Goodacre for one of my lord's tenants, and imagined he was only come on the ſcore of renewing a leaſe, or ſome other country affairs relating to himſelf, which I had no manner of curioſity to pry into, I was in ſome debate within myſelf whether I ſhould

ſhould ſtay, or go directly out of the houſe; the door being then open; but a certain impulſe, the meaning of which I cannot account for, ſwayed me to purſue my firſt thought, and I turned back and accompanied him into the preſence of my lord, from whom he met with a reception not commonly given by perſons of quality to a man of his plain appearance, except on particular occaſions. His lordſhip made him ſit down in a chair very near himſelf, and, with a ſmiling countenance, and the greateſt affability in his voice and air, told him, he was glad to ſee him look ſo well and hearty; that he hoped his wife and family enjoyed the ſame ſhare of good health; and then aſked what buſineſs had brought him up to London. To the former part of theſe obliging ſpeeches he only anſwered with ſeveral low bows, but to the latter replied in theſe terms—

Goodacre. Why, my lord, your lordſhip knows we are going to have a new parliament, and belike there will be a great buſtle all over the kingdom about elections; and no wonder if there be; every one makes us ſuch fair promiſes when they come to aſk us for our votes, that it is a hard matter to know which we can moſt depend upon. We have been ſerved baſely, very baſely, by ſome of our repreſentatives, and it behoves us to be very cautious for the future.

Honorius. Very true, Mr. Goodacre, it does ſo indeed; and I hope the nation will think ſo.

Goodacre. Now, as to our borough, no man could make finer ſpeeches to us, or pretend he had our intereſt more at heart, than Squire Earnly, before he was choſen; yet he no ſooner got into the Houſe, than he ſhewed he did not care a ſtraw for us, laughed at all our petitions and remonſtrances, and, I am told, made a merit of it to the miniſtry.

Honorius. I am afraid there are too many who have done ſo. Does the ſame gentleman ſet up again?

Goodacre. No, my lord; he would have no chance for it if he did: we know him too well, he ſees that well enough. But it is thought, however, that he will get in for ſome place or other.

Honorius. Nothing more likely. But do you hear who intends to offer himſelf in his ſtead?

Goodacre. Yes, my lord; great intereſt is already making for one Captain Saſhbright. He is as fine a perſon, indeed, as the ſun ſhines upon, but we know nothing of him. He is recommended by Sir Courtly Jobber, and has brought a power of money down with him. They went together in Sir Courtly's coach to ******* fair, bought a many things, and gave them to every body about them. Guineas and broad pieces fly about like hail; any one, almoſt, may have them for picking up.

Honorius. So then he may eaſily carry it, I ſuppoſe?

Goodacre. I cannot tell that, my lord. There was a numerous meeting at the Roſe about a fortnight ago, and Squire Wellwood, of the Green, was put in nomination. His family has been ſettled for a long time at *******; he lives moſt part in the country, does a great deal of good among the poor, and is mainly beloved.

Honorius. I know him, Mr. Goodacre; he is certainly a very worthy gentleman.

Goodacre. Aye, my lord, he would have it all to nothing, if it was not for one conſideration.

Honorius. What is that?

Goodacre. The captain has promiſed that, if he gets his election, he will procure an act of parliament for a new road to be cut, at the government's expence, from ***** to *****, which your lordſhip knows would be a great advantage to our market.

Honorius. A very great one, indeed.

Goodacre. Aye, my lord, if we were ſure it would be done; but there lies the query. Some people will promiſe any thing to gain their point, and never think of it afterwards. We all know Squire Wellwood to be a noble gentleman, and ſo may Captain Saſhbright too; he may, or he may not. Now we are ſtrangely divided in our opinions, whether we ought to leave the certain good for the uncertain better, and have at length reſolved to be decided by your lordſhip.

Honorius. By me!

Goodacre. Yes, my lord. We know your lordſhip to be a wiſe man, and a true lover of your country.

Honorius. I have always thought, Mr. Goodacre, that to meddle in theſe things would prove me deſerving neither of the one nor the other of the epithets you give me. Every elector ought to give his vote according to the dictates of his conſcience, and not ſuffer himſelf to be

be ſwayed by any intereſt or motive whatever; and for a nobleman, or other perſon of diſtinction, to attempt, either by menaces or cajolings, to make them act to the contrary, appears to me to be the moſt groſs encroachment on liberty that can be offered.

Goodacre. But here the caſe is widely different, my lord.

Honorius. I grant it is. You deſire my advice as a friend, not ſubmit to be governed by me as a director; it would therefore be ungenerous, and even cruel, in me, to ſuffer you to be deluded by falſe pretences, when it is ſo eaſily in my power to put you upon your guard againſt them. In the firſt place, you ought to conſider that Captain Sathbright, whatever his character may otherwiſe be, is an officer in the army; and, as ſuch, it is his intereſt to promote the continuance of a ſtanding army, and conſequently of thoſe taxes which are neceſſary for the ſupport of it. In the ſecond, Sir Courtly Jobber, who it ſeems is the perſon who recommends him, has for a long time, to my certain knowledge, been an agent for the miniſtry, and is indebted for his title and the beſt part of the eſtate he is in poſſeſſion of, merely to the good ſervices he has rendered them.

Goodacre Aye, marry, theſe things are worth thinking of indeed! ſo I ſuppoſe, my lord, the money he ſo plentifully throws about is none of his own?

Honorius. Not a doit; he will be reimburſed with intereſt.

Goodacre. And yet I know not, my lord, but there may be ſome among us fooliſh enough to be inveigled by this bait. Alackaday! we country people are ignorant of ſuch practices; we little think what the great folks in town are doing; and a many there are that would not believe a word of it without good authority. Oh, I wiſh your lordſhip were down at Egum Hall at this critical juncture!

Honorius. I will be there, Mr. Goodacre, in ſpite of the averſion I have always had to appear at elections, or to diſtinguiſh myſelf on any occaſion. My love to the place which gave me birth, and good-will to my countrymen, ſhall overbalance all other conſiderations. I will do all I can to ſtrengthen the weak eyes which are in danger of being dazzled with Sir Courtly's gold, and ſhew them the falſe luſtre of his fleeting promiſes.

Goodacre. Heaven bleſs your lordſhip!—A noble reſolution!

Honorius. When do you return, Mr. Goodacre?

Goodacre. I ſhall lie but this one night in town, my lord, and ſet out betime to-morrow morning.

Honorius. I will not be two days behind you: in the mean time, you may tell them what I ſay.

Goodacre. It will be joyful news to ſome.

There paſſed no farther converſation between them; the honeſt countryman roſe up to take his leave, full of tranſport at the ſucceſs of his negociation; but Lord Honorius would not permit him to depart, till he had rung the bell for Mr. Downright, and given orders that he ſhould be made welcome to the beſt entertainment the houſe afforded. I left him to accept the invitation, and returned to my apartment, well ſatisfied in my mind that I was now enabled to form a right judgment of this nobleman's principles and diſpoſition.

CHAP. IV.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH THE DETAIL OF A VERY REMARKABLE INCIDENT; WHICH, I BELIEVE, IF CONSIDERED WITH A DUE ATTENTION, THERE ARE BUT FEW PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY OF THE FAIR-SEX, WHO WILL NOT FIND THEMSELVES ENABLED TO BECOME BETTER MEMBERS OF SOCIETY BY HAVING PERUSED.

A Certain ſacred writer tells us, that the tongue is an unruly member, and preaches much concerning the government of it; but I dare not preſume to inſiſt too much on his authority, as he has been, with others of his cotemporaries, pretty much exploded; and I might be looked upon, by my polite readers, as a very old-faſhioned, ſilly fellow, to make any mention of him. But I may venture, without running the riſque of being read with a horſe-laugh, to quote the words of another very great and learned perſon of a more modern date, who ſays, that the tongue is the moſt

moſt dangerous of all weapons; that it is capable of deſtroying all peace, all love, all harmony, in the world; of ſowing diſſenſions among families; of diſuniting the hearts of the deareſt friends and relations; of ruining the reputation and fortune of whomſoever it is levelled againſt; and that even murders and the worſt of miſchiefs may be occaſioned by it.

That the tongue, when it becomes the inſtrument of a malicious heart, carries a thouſand daggers in it, is a truth which the obſervation of every one evinces. But this is not all: publick abuſe or private ſcandal, defamation and detraction, are not the only vices of the tongue; an unguarded word is frequently productive of the moſt unhappy conſequences; it wounds, as it were, by chance-medley, and a perſon may be ſtabbed in the moſt tender part without any intention in the giver of the blow. A talkative diſpoſition, or, in other words, a paſſion for repeating every thing one ſees and hears, or even gueſſes at, is extremely dangerous to ſociety; and though it is a foible proceeding rather from levity than ill-nature, ſometimes produces the ſame effects. Thoſe guilty of it, perhaps, may mean no hurt; but, alas! they conſider not how far the perſon to whom they are ſpeaking may be intereſted in the report they make, and that what they imagine of no moment may ſtab him to the quick. Nothing is more common than for people to hurt thus at random; and, by their raſhneſs, to occaſion accidents, which, if they foreſaw, they would be moſt careful to prevent. As a late poet emphatically enough expreſſes it—

'Thinking to ſhoot my arrow o'er the
'houſe,
'I have kill'd my brother.'

But this inadvertency, as great a weakneſs as it doubtleſs is, has in it ſomewhat yet more excuſable than to reveal a ſecret which we are conſcious muſt give the hearer pain. I confeſs that this is ſometimes done through good-will; but then it is a very miſtaken good-will in many caſes. If I know a perſon ſuſtains an injury, and has it in his power to redreſs the grievance, it is certainly my duty to acquaint him with it; but when the evil is without a remedy, it is infinitely more kind to ſuffer him to remain in ignorance. To be well deceived, is almoſt equal to not being deceived at all: our happineſs conſiſts in the imagination of it; and if we firmly believe ourſelves poſſeſſed of what we wiſh, it is the ſame thing as being ſo in reality. How cruel is it, then, for any one to draw back the friendly curtain that hides ill-fortune from us, and compel us to behold our wretchedneſs! Every one who is thus unhappily undeceived, may cry out with Bellamira, in the play—

——————'Ah, cruel friend!
'Why didſt thou wake me from my dream
'of bliſs!
'Why bring me from that ſcene of fancied
'joys,
'To one of real anguiſh, horror, and de-
'ſpair!'

Many unhappy inſtances of theſe well-meant ill offices have come to my knowledge ſince I was in poſſeſſion of the gift of Inviſibility; but I ſhall recite only one of them, which, as it is a very late tranſaction, and but few people know the real truth of, is at preſent a matter of much ſpeculation among thoſe who are any way acquainted with the parties concerned, or have even heard their names.

Meroveus and Deidamia were an extreme happy pair; the railers againſt marriage could find nothing in the conduct of either of them to countenance any ſarcaſms on that ſtate. The moſt tender affection had been the chief, if not the ſole motive of the union between them; and the ſecure and uninterrupted poſſeſſion of each other, inſtead of diminiſhing, ſeemed rather to increaſe their mutual ardour, and their firſt bridal fondneſs appeared in their behaviour after having ſerved a more than ſeven years apprenticeſhip to Hymen. Yet how, on a ſudden, have we ſeen all this ſweet ſerenity turned into ſtorms and tempeſts! Meroveus and Deidamia, who it was thought could not have lived a ſingle week out of each other's preſence, are now parted; according to all probability, parted to meet no more in love.

Beſides the many great accompliſhments which juſtified the affection they ſo long had towards each other, both of them were accounted perſons of an excellent underſtanding and ſolid ſenſe. Nothing, therefore, could have more amazed

amazed the world, than that they ſhould come to this open rupture; even though ſome little cauſe of complaint had happened either on the one ſide or the other. An event ſo ſtrange, ſo little dreamed of, put all conjecture to a ſtand; people pretended not even to gueſs what ſhould be the occaſion, much leſs to unravel ſo great a myſtery; the accompliſhment of that work was reſerved by fate for the Inviſible Spy alone. The manner in which I made this diſcovery, I ſhall relate as concisely as the converſation which let me into it will admit of.

As I was one day taking a ſolitary walk on Conſtitution Hill, I ſaw Deidamia leaning on the arm of Eutracia, a lady of birth and fortune, who had been bred up with her at the boarding-ſchool, and ever ſince been her moſt intimate friend and companion. Juſt as they approached the place where I was, the following dialogue began between them—

Deidamia. Now for the ſecret you have to tell me; methinks I have a more than ordinary impatience to hear it, and we cannot be more retired: no living ſoul is near us, and there is no danger of any one coming to interrupt our diſcourſe, as all the world are in the Mall.

Eutracia. I will not keep you long in ſuſpence, my dear; but firſt you muſt anſwer two or three queſtions I have to aſk you, and then reſolve to arm yourſelf with all the fortitude you are miſtreſs of, not to be too much ſhocked at what I ſhall relate.

Deidamia. I cannot conceive that there is any thing which either you or any one elſe can tell me capable of giving me a ſhock. But pray, what is it you would know from me?

Eutracia. The town looks upon you as one of the moſt happy women in it; is it true that you are really ſo?

Deidamia. Indeed, my dear, I think myſelf ſo; and if I would labour to be more bleſſed, know not how to form a ſingle wiſh beyond what I poſſeſs.

Eutracia. There are many private cauſes of diſquiet, which prudence obliges us to conceal. Are you thoroughly convinced of the affection of your huſband?

Deidamia. I never had the leaſt cauſe to doubt it; and the tenderneſs I have for him is ſo ſincere and delicate, as I think would make me eaſily perceive a want of it in him. But wherefore do you aſk? you cannot have any reaſon to ſuſpect him.

Eutracia. Ah, poor Deidamia!

Deidamia. Why do you ſigh, and look ſo piteouſly upon me? Some wretch has certainly belied Meroveus to you.

Eutracia. No. But one more interrogatory, and I have done. Does he never abſent himſelf without letting you know where he goes? never lie out of his own houſe?

Deidamia. Very ſeldom, and that but lately. An intimate friend of his makes his addreſſes to a young lady at Hammerſmith. He frequently deſires my huſband's company with him, and they ſometimes ſtay all night; when having ſupped there, it is dangerous to return to London, as the roads are now infeſted.

Eutracia. How eaſy is it to deceive the innocent!—Meroveus is a villain!

Deidamia. How, Eutracia! a villain! Had any other called him ſo, my reſentment ſhould have ſhewn how much I deſpiſed ſo baſe an accuſation.

Eutracia. Alas! it is your own love and honour makes you ſo tenacious of his, but he is falſe in both; and I again repeat the name, he is a villain! and will put it in your power to prove him ſo, by the teſtimony of your own eyes and ears, provided you promiſe to give him no previous hints, that you have diſcovered, or even ſuſpect his perfidy.

Deidamia. But how—how, Eutracia, is he a villain?

Eutracia. He keeps a miſtreſs; ſome common wench, no doubt: but he adores, doats on her, pretends himſelf her huſband; and thoſe nights when you imagine him at Hammerſmith, he paſſes with her.

The tender Deidamia was now ſo overcome at theſe words, that her ſpirits quite forſook her, and ſhe muſt certainly have fallen on the earth, if they had not happened to be very near a bench, at the lower end of the walk, where Eutracia placed her. The keeper of the gate perceiving her condition, was ſo humane as to run and fetch ſome water, which being ſprinkled on her face, ſoon brought her to herſelf. Eutracia, on ſeeing her fair friend thus agitated, ſeemed, and I believe really was, very much concerned at what ſhe had done; for ſhe could not reſtrain ſome tears from falling down her eyes, while ſhe expreſſed herſelf in theſe terms—

'My dearest Deidamia, if I had not 'thought you would have received this 'intelligence with more moderation, you 'should have been for ever ignorant of 'it.' The afflicted lady made no reply to these words; but in a few minutes growing somewhat more composed, quitted the bench, and leaning on Eutracia, the conversation was renewed in this manner—

Deidamia. Oh, Eutracia! little are you capable of conceiving the agonies this poor, distracted, bleeding heart, sustains! Yet I must know all. Tell me by what means you got information of this horrid secret, and how you are assured of it's veracity.

Eutracia. It was not my intention to conceal any part of it; but you must determine to listen with calmness to me.

Deidamia. I will.

Eutracia. Well, then, I will tell you all. I believe you know Mrs. Flounce-it, my mantua-maker.

Deidamia. I saw her once. You may remember I was with you when she brought home your last new sacque.

Eutracia. That woman, you must know, has an interest with some foreign merchants, and can frequently oblige her customers with some curious things which are prohibited to be sold in publick. She came last Monday, and acquainted me that she had several patterns of the most beautiful chintz that ever were seen. I went the next morning in order to see them, and was carried into a back-parlour, for the sake of privacy. As I was looking over the goods, I heard a man call from the top of the stair-case, to know if the coach was come. I thought myself perfectly acquainted with the voice, though I could not just then recollect whose it was; but presently after saw Meroveus lead a woman across the garden, at the lower end of which there is a little door that opens into another street. A pebble, or some such thing, happening to lie in the walk, she stumbled in passing; on which he cried out, with the greatest tenderness—'I hope you are not hurt, my 'love!'—'No,' replied she, briskly; 'not at all. I cannot receive any pre-'judice when my guardian angel is so 'near.' I was so astonished at what I saw and heard, that I had not power to speak; till Mrs. Flounceit, seeing me look earnestly after them, told me they were her lodgers; that they were lately married; but some reasons obliging them to keep it private, they met each other there only once or twice a week. 'So,' said she, 'I have very little trouble with 'them, and they pay me a good rent.'—'But are you sure,' cried I, 'that 'they are man and wife? It may be 'an intrigue.'—'No,' answered she: 'they were recommended to me by a 'gentleman who formerly lodged with 'me himself, one Sir David Townly.'

Deidamia. Oh Heavens! Sir David Townly! Why he is the very person my husband pretends he goes with to Hammersmith.

Eutracia. It is very likely he may be his confidant in this amour.

Deidamia. Yet still I know not how to think it real; one man may be like another. Are you certain it was Meroveus whom you saw?

Eutracia. As certain as that it is Deidamia to whom I am talking. Did he not lie abroad last Monday night?

Deidamia. He did.

Eutracia. And had he not on a dark brown velvet coat, and a black waistcoat trimmed with bugles?

Deidamia. He had. Oh, I can no longer shut my eyes against conviction! The dreadful truth is too glaring to be resisted, and I see myself the most miserable of women!

Eutracia. Do not think so; rather exert the spirit of an injured wife, detect him in his guilt, shame him to repentance, and make him sue for pardon.

Deidamia. Oh that such love as ours has been should come to this!

Eutracia. All may be yet retrieved; your just reproaches may make him lothe his past follies, and become more yours than if he never had transgressed. The next time he takes his pretended journey to Hammersmith, let me know it.

Deidamia. He is gone thither now. Just before you came to call me to the Park, he told me Sir David had engaged his company, and he believed he should not return till morning.

Eutracia. Well, then, he shall be met, my dear Deidamia; he shall be met by those he least expects, or desires to see. I will take you in the morning to Mrs. Flounceit's, under pretence of bringing her a new customer; there you will have the same opportunity I had of discovering your husband's guilt, and

may

may act as you shall judge proper on the occasion.

Deidamia. How shall I contain myself! Base, base man! cruel deceiver of my fond, my unsuspecting heart!—How bear the sight of that vile she! that infamous deluder of his honour! that curted she who has robbed me of the only treasure I valued upon earth, my husband's love!

Here she burst into the most vehement exclamations. But my Crystalline Remembrancer being already overcharged, I can only say that her behaviour verified the words of Mr. Nat. Lee; who, in his description he gives of the passions of womankind in general, has these lines—

'They shrink at thunder, dread the rust-
'ling wind,
'And glitt'ring swords the brightest eyes
'will blind;
'Yet when strong jealousy enflames the
'soul,
'The weak will rage, and calms to tem-
'pests roll.'

The ladies continued their walk, till Phœbus beginning to withdraw his beams, they both thought proper to retire from the approaching dews. Eutracia, justly apprehending the agitations of her friend would become more violent if left alone and at liberty to indulge them, offered to be her companion that night, which the other gladly accepted, and I saw them take coach together for Deidamia's house, after which I went home.

CHAP. V.

WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE AUTHOR'S OPINION, STANDS IN NO NEED OF A PRELUDE, AS IT CONTAINS ONLY THE SEQUEL OF AN ADVENTURE TOO INTERESTING TO ALL DEGREES OF PEOPLE NOT TO DEMAND THE ATTENTION OF EVERY READER.

I Was truly concerned at the injustice which I perceived poor Deidamia sustained; and but little pleased with Eutracia, either for the information she had given her of it, or for advising her to detect Meroveus in the manner concerted between them: indeed, I feared that the consequences of such an interview would be only to make the husband become more hardened in his guilt, and her affliction increase by finding her resentment disregarded.

Few men can bear reproofs, much less reproaches. If ever they quit a darling folly, the reformation must come of themselves; it must proceed from a consciousness they have done amiss, and not from being told so by others. There is a pride in human nature which disdains admonition, and makes us persist in error, which, if not taken notice of, perhaps in time we might discover to be such, grow ashamed of, and amend. Besides, remonstrances from a person whom we look upon as any way our inferior, either in point of understanding or circumstances, will be so far from having any weight, that they will rather add to our contempt, and, it may be, raise in us an utter aversion to the giver. Custom has made the husband so much the head of the wife, that, tenacious of his authority, it is but seldom he submits to be influenced by her in matters of much less moment to him than his pleasures.

Indeed, when a woman is wronged in the manner Deidamia was, it must be confessed that the shock is greatly trying, and that she has the strongest reason for complaining; yet will she still find it most prudent to forbear. Love and gentleness are the only weapons by which that sex can hope to conquer; and she who attempts to have recourse to any other, only hurts herself. By seeming not to suspect her husband's vices, she will, at least, oblige him to keep them as private as he can, and also to treat her with all the respect due to her character, and the sacred union between them; whereas, by growing clamorous and impatient, she furnishes him with a pretence to use her ill, and turns the indifference he before had for her into hatred and detestation.

One of our best poets has an observation on this head, which I think is very well worthy of the serious attention of all who are either injured in reality, or imagine themselves to be so, yet find it their interest to preserve an amicable correspondence with the person guilty of the injury; as it is certain that no man, detected in the thing which he wishes to

conceal, can ever love the perſon by whom he is detected. The words of the author I mentioned are theſe—

' Forgiveneſs to the injur'd does belong;
' But they ne'er pardon who have done the
' wrong.'

Theſe reflections, together with my impatience to ſee how Deidamia would ſupport the full conviction of her huſband's falſehood, ſo much took up my mind, that it was a conſiderable time before I remembered how great an impediment lay between me and the gratification of my curioſity. Mrs. Flounceit's houſe was to be the ſcene of action; and the ladies, during their whole converſation, had made no mention in what ſtreet, nor even in what quarter of the town, that woman lived: however, as I ſuppoſed her to be a noted woman in her buſineſs, I hoped to get over this difficulty; and did ſo, by ſending an emiſſary to enquire among the mercers, hoop-petticoat-makers, and other ſuch people who are employed in the equipments of the ladies; and I went not to bed without receiving the direction I ſtood in need of.

As I knew not the hour in which Meroveus and the partner of his looſer pleaſures would be preparing to depart, nor that in which Deidamia would be conducted by Eutracia to behold this proof of her misfortune, I took care to go very early to Mrs. Flounceit's, and was obliged to wait a conſiderable time before the door happened to be opened to let any one paſs in or out: at laſt, however, it was ſo; I got an opportunity to enter, went into the back parlour, and poſted myſelf in that corner of it which I thought would be the ſafeſt and moſt commodious. My patience was not here put to any long trial; the ladies arrived a few minutes after I came, ushered into the room by Mrs. Flounceit, who placed them on a ſettee with a great deal of formal complaiſance, and then made ſome apologies, as many people do when they are dreſſed as well as they can be, for being in ſuch a diſhabille, and not in the order ſhe could wiſh to receive them.

It was eaſy for me to perceive, by Deidamia's countenance, how ill ſhe had paſſed the night; Eutracia alſo ſeemed in ſome agitation, though ſhe diſſembled it as well as ſhe was able; and after giving ſome ſlight anſwer to Mrs. Flounceit's compliments, told her ſhe had brought a friend to look over ſome of her fine things; on which the mantua-maker immediately opened a large preſs, and brought out ſeveral pieces of chintz, with ſome French brocades, and rich Italian ſilks; theſe ſhe ſpread upon a table, accompanying that action with many praiſes on the beauty and curioſity of each. But it was in vain ſhe boaſted, in vain ſhe magnified; all ſhe ſaid, as well as the real merit of the goods ſhe exhibited to ſale, was wholly loſt on Deidamia; the mind of that afflicted lady was too much bent on thoſe things which ſhe expected to be witneſs of, to have any eyes or ears for thoſe which were not preſent to her: ſhe took up firſt one piece, and then another, but without ſeeming to know what ſhe did; and had ſomething ſo diſtracted in her air and geſtures, that Eutracia was obliged to keep Mrs. Flounceit in diſcourſe, to prevent her taking any notice of it. Her behaviour, joined with my knowledge of the cauſe, reminded me of Mr. Dryden's words; which, if ſhe had been inclined to think of poetry, ſhe might pretty juſtly have applied to her own condition in this criſis—

' Love, juſtice, nature, pity, and revenge,
' Have kindled a wildfire in my breaſt;
' I am all a civil war within,
' And, like a veſſel ſtruggling in a ſtorm,
' Require more hands than one to keep me
' upright.'

But if ſhe was ſo little able to ſupport the bare idea of the ſhock ſhe came on purpoſe to receive, what muſt ſhe endure when ſuſpenſe, and all the remains of hope, were ſwallowed up in the cruel certainty of her misfortune, and conviction left no farther room for doubt? The maid of the houſe came into the room with a chocolate-pot in her hand, and told her miſtreſs that the gentleman and lady above ſtairs gave their compliments, and deſired the favour of her company to breakfaſt with them. Mrs. Flounceit was about to make ſome anſwer to this invitation, when Deidamia, not able to contain herſelf, flew out of the parlour, and directly up ſtairs, where ſhe found Meroveus and a young woman ſitting on the ſide of the bed they had but lately quitted.

Deidamia

Plate V

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Deidamia had scarce entered the chamber, when she surprized the guilty pair with these words—'I have a right, Sir, 'to think my company ought to be as 'acceptable to Meroveus as that of Mrs. 'Flounceit, or any other woman.'

Eutracia had followed Deidamia as fast as she could, in order, I suppose, to prevent any desperate effects of her present passion, and I was not far behind. But it will be more easy for the reader to conceive the surprize which appeared in the looks of Meroveus, than for me to express it; he started up, and, with a voice which the various emotions of his mind rendered almost unintelligible, said to her—

Meroveus. Confusion! Deidamia!—Madam, what brings you here?

Deidamia. That is a question which ought rather to be put to you. I come in pursuit of an ungrateful, too much beloved husband: you to indulge a lawless flame for an abandoned prostitute!

Meroveus. Madam, Madam, this does not become you!

Deidamia. Does it become you, Sir, to leave your honest home and wife, make pitiful excuses for your absence, and skulk in corners with a wretch like this—this abject hireling of licentious wishes!

Mistress. Madam, I would not have you think I am any such person: I did not know Meroveus was a married man.

Deidamia. 'Tis false, vile creature! You could not know Meroveus, without knowing he had a wife; a wife who, without boasting, is every way his equal. But get out of my sight, that I may have liberty to ask my perjured husband what he could see in that face of yours to be preferred to mine.

On this Meroveus was opening his mouth to speak, but was prevented by Mrs. Flounceit; who being astonished on the lady's running up stairs, and by the noise she immediately heard above, had hobbled up as fast as her fat would give her leave, and came into the room that moment, crying as she entered—

Mrs. Flounceit. Bless me! what is the matter here?

Deidamia. Perhaps, Madam, you are ignorant that your house is made a brothel?

Mrs. Flounceit. O, my stars!—A brothel! Heaven forbid!

Eutracia. My friend tells you true, indeed. She is the lawful wife of that gentleman; they have been married above seven years; I was present at their wedding; and that woman, there, is no better than a prostitute.

Mrs. Flounceit. O the vile slut!—I wonder Sir David Townly should offer to bring me into this scrape; he knows very well I never countenance such doings.—Hussey, get out of my house this minute!

In speaking this, she advanced towards the mistress of Meroveus, and was about to push her out of the room; but that gentleman, perceiving her intent, stepped between; and with a visage all enflamed with wrath, said—'Hold, Madam, hold! This lady has put her-'self under my protection, and I will 'take care to defend her from all in-'sults whatsoever.' Then turning to Deidamia, went on thus—'As for you, 'Madam, you have only exposed me, 'and undone yourself. I will never 'see you more!' He then took his trembling mistress by the hand, to lead her down stairs: Deidamia, in the utmost agony of spirit, followed him; and catching him by the arm, cried out to him—'Oh stay, Meroveus! You will 'not, sure, add injury to injury! Stay, 'I conjure you, and let that woman 'go!' To which he replied—'Stand 'off, Madam! Your touch is now 'more hateful to me than ever it was 'agreeable; so leave you to repent the 'cause.'

This cruel rebuff not making her let go the hold she had taken of him, he threw her off with the greatest contempt, and in an instant was out of the house with his dissolute companion; who was, doubtless, as hasty as himself to get from a place where she could expect nothing but affronts. Deidamia would have pursued her ungenerous husband, perhaps even into the street, had she not been withheld by Eutracia, who endeavoured to convince her how little it would avail to remonstrate any thing to him whilst he continued in this humour.

Rage had till now kept up the spirits of this unhappy lady; but the objects of it being removed, and the power of reflecting returned, she sunk into a grief no less immoderate; she wept, she wrung her hands, beat her lovely breast, she swooned several times, and in her intervals of sense could only cry out—'Cru-'el, barbarous Meroveus! Unfaithful, 'ungenerous

'ungenerous husband! Good Heaven! 'for what unknown transgression am I 'become thus miserable!' Neither Eutracia nor Mrs. Flouncett omitted any thing in their power which they thought might serve to give her consolation, but all they could do was insufficient; and it was some hours before she was enough recovered even to be carried home. As soon as she was, Eutracia went with her in the coach; and I walked home, touched to the very soul at the sight of her distress.

I have already given the reader my opinion concerning the extreme folly of revealing unwelcome secrets to our friends; so shall forbear adding any farther reflections on that head, and proceed, with as much brevity as the story will admit, to the catastrophe of this unhappy adventure.

I went the next morning to the house of Meroveus, and was convinced, by what I heard the servants say among themselves, that he had not been at home that night; which, indeed, I feared would be the case. On my going up stairs, I found Deidamia lying on a couch, in a very dejected, melancholy posture. Eutracia was sitting near her; that lady, it seems, having never quitted her since the unfortunate visit they made together at Mrs. Flouncett's. But as the discourse between them consisted only of complaints on the one side, and persuasions to moderation on the other, I think it not material enough to be inserted. I had not been in the room above a quarter of an hour, before a servant presented a letter to Deidamia; it was from her husband, and contained these lines—

'MADAM,

'I Am determined to live easy, which I 'am certain is utterly impracticable 'for me to do with you, after what 'passed yesterday between us. What I 'then said in heat of passion, I now 'repeat in cool blood, and on the 'most mature deliberation. In fine, 'an eternal division must be the conse-'quence of your behaviour, nor should 'the tongues of angels dissuade me 'from this resolution: you will do well 'to bear it with patience, as the misfor-'tune, if it may be one, has happened 'entirely through your own fault.

'To leave you no just reason to com-'plain, I shall order the jointure, settled 'on you by our marriage articles, to 'be regularly paid to you, as though I 'were no more; and shall resign to you 'all the plate, linen, and household fur-'niture, excepting only my books, the 'India chest and bureau in my dress-'ing-room.

'As to our children, the boy I shall 'take under my care, the girl I leave 'to yours; and shall also add one hun-'dred pounds per annum to the above-'mentioned jointure, for her mainte-'nance and education.

'Farewel for ever!—As we no more 'must meet in love, it will be highly 'improper, and I think could not be 'very agreeable to either of us, to meet 'at all; I shall therefore refrain, as 'much as possible, going to any of those 'places you are accustomed to frequent, 'and hope you will have prudence 'enough to take the same precaution in 'avoiding me, especially when I tell 'you, that it is the only thing in which 'you can now oblige your ill-treated 'husband,

'MEROVEUS.

'P. S. I shall send to-morrow 'for the things I mentioned.'

My fair readers will be the best judges of what Deidamia felt on finding her husband had taken a resolution which could not but give the most mortal stab both to her love and pride. She paused a little after having read it, then gave it to Eutracia, crying out at the same time, with the greatest emphasis—'See there, 'my dear Eutracia, this wicked hus-'band is the sole aggressor, yet pretends 'to be the person who has reason to 'resent!' That young lady, who was all fire and spirit could not forbear load-ing Meroveus with reproaches at the end of every paragraph she read; and when she had finished, said to Deida-mia—

Eutracia. And how, my dear, do you intend to proceed with this base, this most injurious man?

Deidamia. Indeed I know not.

Eutracia. If I were in your place, I would write him such an answer as should make his ears tingle.

Deidamia. Alas, you know not what it is to be a wife!—But I will write, however.

She then rung her bell for the foot-man, and asked whether the person who brought the letter waited for an an-swer.

Footman.

Footman. No, Madam, he only bid me deliver it into your own hands, and told me my master ordered me to come to him about two hours hence at George's Coffee-house, and bring some linen with me.

Deidamia. 'Tis very well. But do not go till I have spoke to you again; I have a message to send by you.

The fellow assured her he would not fail to obey her commands, and withdrew; after which she sat down to her escritoire, took pen and paper, and began to write in the following terms—

'Cruel and unjust, yet still dear Me-'roveus!

'IF there needed any other proof than 'that shameful one I yesterday was 'witness of, that I am miserable in the 'total loss of your affection, the letter 'I have just now received would be a 'convincing one. What! after seven 'years conjugal tenderness, perfect and 'sincere on my side, and well dissembled 'on yours, can you entertain a thought 'of parting? of tearing a family to 'pieces which has hitherto lived so re-'spectable in the world? Must I be 'doomed to mourn a husband's loss 'even while that husband lives? Must 'my son be bred an alien to his mother, 'and my daughter a stranger to her fa-'ther? O think, Meroveus! and if no 'consideration of me has any weight, 'let that of your own reputation, and 'the interest of our children, prevail on 'you to alter this cruel resolution! We 'may at least live civilly together, if not 'with the same fondness as before this 'accident. Yet why should we not? I 'am willing to meet you more than half 'way in love. You cannot deny but 'you have wronged me in the most ten-'der point. I confess I was too rash 'in the manner of detecting you. We 'both have been to blame. What is 'done cannot be recalled, but it may 'be repented of: let us exchange for-'giveness, and endeavour to forget what 'is past.

'There was a time when every little 'ailment felt by your Deidamia gave 'equal pain to you; oh! can you then 'throw off at once all pity, all huma-'nity, all remorse, for the agonies you 'cannot but be sensible my poor tor-'mented heart now labours under! 'No, 'tis impossible! reason, honour, 'and good-nature, forbid it! You will 'return, accept the pardon I shall with 'joy bestow; and, in return, vouchsafe 'me yours. Let not my hopes deceive 'me; I am sure they will not, if you 'will suffer yourself to reflect seriously 'on the unhappy consequences that must 'infallibly attend a separation from her 'who ever has been, and desires to con-'tinue, with the greatest sincerity, your 'most faithful, and most affectionate 'wife,

'DEIDAMIA.'

This she communicated to Eutracia, who approved of the former part of it, but highly condemned the latter, as thinking it too submissive. Deidamia, however, was of a different opinion; and the footman coming in soon after to know her commands, she sealed it up, and put it into his hands to deliver to his master; bidding him say withal, that she was very much indisposed.

After he was gone, the ladies began to enter into some dispute concerning the authority of a husband, and the duty that was expected from a wife; but as I could promise myself no farther information by their discourse on this subject, and, besides, remembering that I had some business of my own to dispatch, I left the place that instant, not without an intention to return thither the next day. Accordingly I went in the morning, and found poor Deidamia almost drowned in tears, and walking backwards and forwards in one of her rooms in a distracted posture. The cause of these fresh agonies I easily perceived by a letter which lay open on the table; the contents whereof were as follow—

'MADAM,

'I Have been in some debate within 'my mind, whether to answer your 'epistle in the manner I now do, or not 'to answer it at all, would be the most 'effectual means to prevent your giv-'ing me or yourself any future trouble. 'You find I have pursued the former of 'these methods, and hope you will 'have discretion enough not to involve 'me in a second dilemma on this score. 'Be assured, I did not resolve on a final 'separation without having well weighed 'the consequences attending it, and find 'them such as can no way come in com-'petition with my peace of mind; with-'out which life would be a curse, my 'bed a bed of thorns, my table a de-

'sart,

'fart, my houſe a hell, and every friend 'that came to viſit, a fury to torment 'me.

'See the reverſe your jealous folly 'has occaſioned! tax me not, therefore, 'with ingratitude. A thouſand times 'you have confeſſed you thought your-'ſelf as happy as a woman could be, 'and it is certain you were truly ſo. 'During the whole courſe of the years 'we lived together, you never had the 'leaſt ſhadow of a cauſe to complain of 'my want either of reſpect or tender-'neſs. If I indulged any pleaſures 'which I imagined would give you diſ-'quiet, I took care to be very private 'in them. Why, then, did you ſuffer 'yourſelf to be led by an idle curioſity 'to pry into ſecrets which the diſcovery 'of muſt give you pain, and poſſibly 'prove the total deſtruction of that love 'which once you called your greateſt 'bleſſing?

'It is doubtleſs beſt for both of us, 'as you rightly enough obſerve, to for-'get what is paſt; but am far from thinking it can be done by the way 'you mean. No, to forget can only 'be accompliſhed by avoiding each 'other's preſence, and ceaſing all kind 'of communication between us. I ſhall 'therefore give orders to my ſervant to 'charge himſelf with no letter or meſ-'ſage you may think fit to ſend; and 'deſire you will aſſure yourſelf, that this 'is the very laſt you ever ſhall receive 'from me. Farewel. I wiſh you all 'happineſs in any other ſphere of life 'than that you lately lived in with

'MEROVEUS.'

After having examined this epiſtle, I liſtened to what paſſed between Eutracia and Deidamia: but though I ſtaid till my Tablets were crouded, I ſhall forbear inſerting the particulars of theſe ladies diſcourſe, for reaſons which will be hereafter explained; and only ſay in general, that Eutracia would fain have ſpirited up her friend to reſentment and diſdain againſt a huſband whom ſhe thought ſo unworthy of her; that Deidamia's love overcame her ſex's pride; and, in fine, that the one argued like a virgin, and the other like an affectionate wife. Whether Deidamia made any further attempts to move her obdurate huſband to a reconciliation, I cannot be poſitive; but believe ſhe did not, for ſhe retired ſoon after into the country, whence ſhe is but lately returned; and, whatever her heart may endure, has very much regained her uſual compoſure of countenance and behaviour.

CHAP. VI.

IS SOMEWHAT MORE CONCISE THAN ORDINARY, BUT TO THE PURPOSE; AND WILL BE FOUND NOT THE LEAST WORTHY OF ANY IN THE BOOK OF BEING REGARDED WITH ATTENTION.

AS during the courſe of theſe lucubrations I have been extremely circumſtantial in the reports I have made, the reader has a right to be ſurprized that I omitted the diſcourſe between Deidamia and Eutracia; I ſhall, therefore, according to my promiſe, relate my motive for ſo doing, and flatter myſelf it is ſuch as will render me perfectly excuſable in this point. Much about the time of the adventure related in the two preceding chapters, I happened to be witneſs of a converſation which, though between different perſons, and on a very different occaſion, was ſtill on the ſubject of marriage, the authority of a huſband, and the ſubmiſſion expected from a wife; I left out the former, and made choice of the latter, as of the two the moſt intereſting.

Two ſiſters, whoſe characters I preſent to the publick under the names of Flavia and Celemena, have both of them a tolerable ſhare of beauty, but no other qualification, either natural or acquired, that could entitle them to the hope of an elevated ſtation; yet, by the benevolent aſpect of their happy planets, are they become the brides of Alcandor and Thelamont, perſons diſtinguiſhed in the world by their birth and fortune, and ſtill more ſo by the greatneſs of their merit. Theſe nuptials, ſo aſtoniſhing to the town, and which happened ſoon after one another, gave me a curioſity to diſcover, by the help of my Inviſibility, in what faſhion the ladies would behave themſelves in a ſphere of life ſo altogether new to them, and ſo little expected, even in their vaineſt wiſhes, ever to arrive at.

Flavia was the eldeſt, and it was to her I made my firſt viſit. She was in her dreſſing-room, ſitting at her toilet, with

with her waiting-maid behind her, giving the finiſhing ſtroke to her head-tire. Thelamont was alſo there, and ſtood leaning his elbow on a bureau, with a good deal of diſſatisfaction in his countenance; while ſhe kept looking in the glaſs, and, without turning her head towards him, ſaid—

Flavia. Pr'ythee, Thelamont, let us talk no more of this ſtuff; I am quite ſick of it. I am certainly the beſt judge of theſe things, and it is in vain to perſuade me, for I will not be contradicted.

Thelamont. You will not, then, oblige me?

Flavia. Poſitively no; not when you intermeddle in theſe affairs.

Thelamont. Well, then, Madam, I ſhall ſay no more; but muſt tell you, that I thought I had a right to expect this proof of your complaiſance.

With theſe words he flung out of the room, and ſhe ſaid to herſelf—

Flavia. Pith! was there ever any thing ſo teazing! Men are mighty fooliſh ſometimes.—Catharine, bring me my gauze handkerchief.

Maid. Oh, Ma'am, did not your ladyſhip ſay you would wear your new tippet to-day?

Flavia. Hah!—Yes—no—it will ſhew too much of my neck.

Maid. Oh, Ma'am, your ladyſhip cannot ſhew too much of ſo beautiful a part.

Flavia. That's true: but I ſcratched one of my breaſts with a pin this morning.

Maid. Oh the ugly pin! I wiſh I knew which it was, that I might crook it quite double, and throw it in the fire.

Juſt as the maid had expreſſed her reſentment againſt the weapon that had wounded her miſtreſs, Celemena came into the room; and, after ſaluting her ſiſter with a freedom ſuitable to the nearneſs of their blood and friendſhip, ſaid to her—

Celemena. What is the matter, my dear ſiſter? You do not look pleaſed to-day.

Flavia. Umph! No, not very well pleaſed; nor, indeed, much diſpleaſed.

Celemena. I met Thelamont going out as I came in. I thought he ſeemed more reſerved than uſual, and in a very ill humour.

Flavia. If he chuſes to be ſo, it would be a pity any one ſhould attempt to put him out of it.

Celemena. I hope no miſunderſtanding has happened between you?

Flavia. No, no, we underſtand one another pretty well. I underſtand that he would fain pretend to take upon him the government of my actions, and he underſtands that I will not let him do it; ſo we have exchanged a few words this morning, that's all.

Celemena. Have a care, ſiſter; quarrels in the beginning of marriage promiſe but little felicity in the continuance of that ſtate.

Flavia. That's true: but it is very provoking when a man will needs interfere in things he has no manner of concern with.

Celemena. Pray, what is the ſubject of your diſpute, if it be not too great a ſecret?

Flavia. Why, you muſt know, he wants me to leave off putting any carmine upon my cheeks, calls it naſty daubing, and ſays I ſhould be a thouſand times handſomer without it.

Celemena. I can ſee nothing extraordinary in all this. There are many men who have an utter averſion to a woman's uſing any art to her complexion.

Flavia. They may cry out againſt it; but yet I am ſure it is frequently owing to art that they fall ſo much in love with us. A little red upon the cheeks gives a ſparkle to the eyes, and a luſtre to the features, which otherwiſe would appear flat and languid. But they are ſo fooliſh as not to conſider this; they like us as they ſee us altogether; and though they may be ſenſible we are painted, never once imagine it is to that neceſſary auxiliary to beauty that we are chiefly indebted for thoſe charms which attract their admiration.

Celemena. Suppoſe it as you ſay, which, however, I am far from allowing to be always the caſe, Thelamont has now ſeen you ſuch as Nature made you: the night wears off that borrowed luſtre, and the morning ſhews you what you truly are; and if he approves of you in this light, I know of no other perſon whom you need be ſtudious to pleaſe.

Flavia. I am of a quite different opinion. O the joy of being gazed at and followed by a whole crouded Mall!

Celemena. Perhaps to laugh: but if ſincere, a very empty joy, and what a married woman ought not to be too ambitious of.

Flavia. So, then, you would have

me comply with my husband's request?

Celemena. Indeed I would advise you to it. I am sure, if Alcandor expressed a desire that I should cut off my hair, and never let it grow again, though it is the gift of Nature, and bestowed upon us as the greatest ornament of our sex, I would not hesitate one moment to oblige him.

Flavia. Then you are a fool.

Celemena. In this point I do not think I am: for besides that duty which the law exacts from every wife to her husband, there are other reasons which would oblige me to refuse nothing to Alcandor.

She accompanied these words with a very significant look; which Flavia observing, ordered her maid, who had been all this time in the room, to withdraw; and, as soon as she was gone, replied to what her sister had said in these terms—

Flavia. I know not what you would say; you would infer that, because Alcandor and Thelamont married us without fortunes, we are therefore bound to be their slaves.

Celemena. Not so: and I dare believe, that neither of them will ever require any submissions from us but such as, if we had always been their equals, would very well become us to grant.

Flavia. Laird! what a bustle you make about equals! Whatever we were before, marriage has made us now their equals; and, for my own part, I shall never submit to do any thing Thelamont requires of me, unless my own inclination happens to concur.

Celemena. Oh, sister, I am amazed to hear you talk in this manner! Have you been married but one month, and can already forget the unhappiness of our single state; our scanty and precarious dependance; the difficulties we found to supply ourselves with even the common necessaries of life? We made, indeed, a kind of tawdry shew when we appeared abroad; but how did we pinch for it at home! Is there no love, no gratitude, due from us to men who have raised us to opulence, grandeur, and respect!

Flavia. Pish! they married us to please themselves, not out of pity to us. But let us have no more of this dull stuff. You must go with me to Mrs. Rakelove's route to-night; it is the first she has had, and I promised her to bring all the company I could.

Celemena. Indeed you must excuse me.

Flavia. For what reason?

Celemena. Alcandor sups at home, and I cannot be abroad.

Flavia. Heavens! how strangely silly you are grown!—Alcandor sups at home! What then? he did not marry you to make you a cook! You do not dress his victuals?

Celemena. No; but he married me to make me a companion at his victuals: and while he continues to desire my presence, as I flatter myself he always will, I shall never form any pretences to be absent.

The face of Flavia grew more red than the carmine had made it, on finding in her sister sentiments so opposite to her own; but was prevented from making any answer by the entrance of a servant, who told her that some ladies were come to visit her; on which she went, accompanied by Celemena, into the dining-room, in order to receive them. Thus ended the conversation I mentioned; and by it the reader may judge which of these two sisters had the greatest share of prudence, best deserved her good fortune, and was most likely to enjoy a long continuance of it.

CHAP. VII.

PRESENTS THE ACCOUNT OF AN INCIDENT WHICH CANNOT BUT BE DEEPLY AFFECTING TO THE YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES, AND NO LESS REMARKABLE IN IT'S EVENT THAN ANY THE AUTHOR'S INVISIBILITYSHIP EVER ENABLED HIM TO DISCOVER.

AMONG all the various deceptions which are carried on in this great world, I know of none more cruel, and more liable to be attended with the worst of consequences, than those practised in the affairs of love; yet it is a crime which passes with impunity, and is scarce censured by any but the persons injured by it, and their particular friends and confidants. Even the ladies, generally speaking, for there is no rule without exceptions, are so little the friends of each other, that we rarely find

find them taking up the quarrel of their sex in this point; on the contrary, they are apt to absolve the vow-breaker, and let the whole blame fall on the believer. A man who has triumphed over the credulity of an hundred women, sees himself not less respected; and sometimes the number of past conquests shall serve him as a recommendation, and be a means of his attaining new ones. Perjury is deemed but a venal transgression in this case; few think that oaths and imprecations, when dictated by the heart of an amorous inclination, though formed in the most binding terms, and uttered in the most solemn manner, are ever registered in heaven.

This vice, as I must take the liberty to call it, is not, however, wholly confined to the male sex; I am sorry to observe, that those of the other, either through pride, vanity, or an inconsistency of nature, are sometimes found guilty of deluding their lovers with fallacious expectations. I hope also to be forgiven by the more discreet part of womankind, when I say that a propensity to such a behaviour is yet less excusable in them than in the men; as a perfect innocence, a sweetness of disposition, and a simplicity of manners, are, or ought to be, the distinguishing characteristicks of the fair-sex.

A young lady, to whom I shall give the name of Syrenia, was endowed by nature with every requisite to command love and admiration; she had fine eyes, a regular set of features, fine hair, and a most delicate complexion; was tall, well-shaped, and had somewhat peculiarly attractive in her air. Fortune had not been altogether so propitious to her; through the extravagancies of her parents, she was left in possession of a very moderate fortune: it was, however, entirely at her own disposal, and sufficient, with the good œconomy she was mistress of, to suppport her in a very genteel, though not a grand way of life.

Proposals of marriage had often been made to her by several eminent and wealthy citizens; but she rejected them all, and despised the thoughts not only of a shop, but also of all other callings and occupations whatever. Ambition was the predominant passion of her soul; and she had vanity enough to think that her birth, her person, and accomplishments, were such as might very well compensate for the smallness of her fortune, and entitle her to higher expectations.

She had lived till the age of twenty-three without having any offer of the kind she hoped; but about the expiration of that æra, a young gentleman, named Rossano, happening to see her at the house of a relation whom he visited became violently in love with her; and soon after finding means to get himself introduced, made a declaration of his passion; to which, knowing what and who he was, she gave all the encouragement he could wish, or that was befitting the character of a modest woman. It would, indeed, have been much to be wondered at, if the addresses of Rossano had not been acceptable to her: he is descended from a very ancient and worthy family; has an estate of eight hundred pounds per annum, entirely free from any incumbrance, either mortgage, dowry, or portions to be paid out of it; his person and behaviour are extremely agreeable; and, to add to all, this, has deservedly the reputation of a man of strict honour, and more sobriety than could be expected from his years and the dissolutenes of the present times.

The sincerity and warmth of his affection making him very strenuous in his pressures, and the advantages she found in a match with him rendering her complying, they were beginning to talk of ordering articles for their marriage to be drawn up; when an unexpected accident, relating to his estate, obliged him to go immediately into the country. Though he proposed to stay but a short time, yet he could not think of being deprived of the sight of his beloved Syrenia, even for a few weeks, without an infinity of grief. She testified little less regret for this enforced separation: their parting was extremely moving; each seemed to endeavour to outvie the other in expressions of tenderness; and the only consolation he had was, the repeated assurances she gave him, that wherever he went he carried her heart along with him.

It is highly probable, that the affection she professed for him was at that time perfectly sincere, and that she looked upon the accident which delayed the celebration of their nuptials as no inconsiderable misfortune to her; but whatever chagrin she might feel at first on this account, it was very soon dissi-

pated, and gave way to ideas of a far different nature. The motive which brought about so sudden and so extraordinary a change in her sentiments, I shall relate, as I was afterwards fully informed of it by the several conversations I was present at by the help of my Invisibility.

She was one morning in the Park with a lady of her acquaintance called Delia, where they were met and joined by a young officer, brother to Delia, and a gentleman who was with him, and equally a stranger to both the ladies, but behaved towards them with the greatest respect and politeness. They walked two or three turns up and down the Mall; after which the gentlemen took their leave, and Syrenia and Delia went to their respective habitations, without thinking any more of what had passed. Little, indeed, could either of them apprehend the consequences of this adventure: but the next day, early in the forenoon, Syrenia was surprized with a visit from Delia; who came running into her apartment without any ceremony, crying out as she entered—

Delia. Joy to you, my dear! I come to wish you joy!

Syrenia. Of what? for I see no other subject of joy than what I always feel on seeing you.

Delia. Me! No, no; a thousand such as me are quite out of the question: but I have the pleasure to congratulate you on the greatest conquest your beauty ever made, or perhaps ever can make!

Syrenia. You are got into a vein of raillery this morning.

Delia. No, upon my honour I never was more serious. Do you not remember the fine gentleman that was with my brother yesterday in the Mall?

Syrenia. Yes; you know they joined company with us.

Delia. His name is Leontine; he is the eldest son of his father, and heir apparent to three thousand pounds a year. You saw his person; for my part, I think nothing can be more agreeable: and my brother tells me he is the most accomplished man he ever knew.

Syrenia. Well, and what is all this to me?

Delia. It is all to you. It seems he saw you last Sunday at Westminster Abbey, fell violently in love with you, and would have followed to have seen where you lived, but was prevented by some gentlemen of his acquaintance, who that instant laid hold of him, and forced him along with them.

Syrenia. 'Tis possible such a one might be there; but I did not take notice of him.

Delia. That may be; but he took so much of you, as not to be able to sleep ever since.

Syrenia. Very romantick, truly! But, pray, how came you so well acquainted with the secrets of his heart, who yesterday seemed an utter stranger to his person?

Delia. I will tell you the whole affair, as my brother last night came and informed me of it. After they had left us, they went and dined together at a tavern. Leontine asked a thousand questions concerning your family, your fortune, and your character; all which, you may be sure, were answered not to your disadvantage. He then made my brother the confidant of the passion you had inspired him with, and intreated him to use his interest with me, as he found I was pretty intimate with you, to engage me to introduce him to you, which I have faithfully promised to do.

Syrenia. What! without my consent?

Delia. I hoped to be forgiven. Such an offer, my dear, is not to be rejected.

Syrenia. It is much beyond my expectations, I must confess; but the disparity between our fortunes is too great.

Delia. If he thinks your person an equivalent, it is not your business to make objections.

Syrenia. That is true: and if I could flatter myself he were really sincere—— But I will consider of it.

Delia. It will be time enough for you to consider, when you have heard what he has to say; for I have promised to bring you together this evening.

Syrenia. This evening! As how?

Delia. As thus: I invite you to sup with me to-night; my brother and Leontine shall come in, as if by accident. Neither your pride nor your modesty has any thing to scruple; for I assure you I will not let even my brother know that I have previously acquainted you with any thing of the matter.

Syrenia. Well, on that condition I will come.

Delia. Indeed, my dear, I should think you very much to blame to turn your back on a prospect so highly advantageous;

advantageous; for though you are well born, well-accomplished, are handsome, and have some fortune of your own, yet the three first of these, as men now think of marriage, weigh but lightly against what they call the incumbrance of a wife; and as to the latter, you know it will not entitle you to a coach and six.

Syrenia. The justice of what you say cannot be denied; but I would do nothing that should occasion my character being called in question, nor would seem too forward, though to promote the highest expectations: therefore, my dear Delia, remember I depend on your prudence.

Delia. In this you safely may. I know too well what is owing to my sex, and the cruel aspersions men are apt to throw on our most innocent freedoms, not to be extremely cautious in avoiding giving the least room for censure.

Syrenia. Indeed, my dear, my observation on your own conduct ought to put to silence all my doubts on that score; and, whatever is the event of this affair, I shall always gratefully acknowledge your good wishes towards me.

Delia. If it succeeds, I shall be a sharer in your good fortune; as nothing gives me a more sensible satisfaction, than to have it in my power to contribute to the happiness of my friends. But I must leave you: I promised to let my brother know whether you could come or not, that he may apprize Leontine of it.

The good-natured Delia, who did not know how far Syrenia had gone with Rossano, went away in speaking these words: but I could easily perceive, by the glow on Syrenia's cheeks, how much she was transported with the purpose of her visit; and was yet more confirmed of her being so, by some disjointed soliloquies she uttered when she thought there was no witness of what she said. 'Three thousand pounds a year, 'and so fine a gentleman as Leontine! 'so handsome, so polite, so every thing 'that is agreeable! If he is as sincere as 'Delia imagines him to be, I shall have 'cause to bless the hour I went to West-'minster Abbey; or rather, that which 'carried me to the Park yesterday; with-'out which, he might never have known 'who I was, or where to find me, and 'should have lost all the advantage 'my good stars seem to have decreed for 'me.'

Here she ceased to speak, other sort of emotions rising in her mind; to which she gave a loose in this exclamation—'It was an unlucky thing I went so far 'with Rossano. The poor man loves 'me to distraction: he will certainly 'break his heart when he finds I have 'forsaken him; and, it may be, re-'proach me as the occasion of his 'death.'

On this her countenance seemed a little disconcerted, but it soon wore off; and, after a short pause, she went on thus—'I am glad, however, that no 'contract has passed between us. The 'encouragement I gave his passion, and 'the verbal promises I made him, need 'be no impediment to my accepting a 'better offer. It will be prudence in 'me, however, not to throw him off, 'nor give him any room to suspect I 'have less affection for him than I had, 'till I am well assured that Leontine is 'in earnest.'

This was enough to shew me the principle and disposition of Syrenia; both which, indeed, were so little pleasing to me, that I had not patience to stay with her any longer, but quitted her apartment with a contempt which, could she have been sensible of, would no doubt have given her some mortification.

I made one of the company that night at Delia's, however; but as it could not be expected that in a meeting which was to pass for casual there should be any conversation except on general topicks, I reaped no other benefit by being present, than to be convinced that Leontine, by the glances he took every opportunity of casting at Syrenia, was indeed very much enamoured, and that she spared no pains to make him more so. The next day he went with the brother of Delia to visit her, and the succeeding one took the liberty of going thither alone, and made a declaration of his passion; which she, having well prepared herself with answers, received in such a manner, as neither to reject, nor with too much readiness encourage.

The ice once broke, he prosecuted his addresses with so much vigour and assiduity, that she thought it would be no breach of modesty to give him room to hope he was not altogether indifferent to her: by degrees, therefore, she became more kind on every visit he made; but did it with caution and reserve, neither by her looks or words forfeiting that

that character of diſcretion ſhe ſo much valued herſelf upon; dropping only ſome hints, as if forced from her from a fund of tenderneſs within, which ſhe would fain endeavour to conceal, but had not the power of doing it. Thus artful in appearing artleſs, Leontine, though a man of very good ſenſe and penetration, never once ſuſpected ſhe was any other than ſuch as ſhe affected to be, plain, ſimple, generous, and incapable of diſguiſing her ſentiments.

It is certain, indeed, that her natural cunning was greatly aſſiſted how to proceed on this occaſion by the intelligence ſhe daily received from Delia, to whoſe brother Leontine made no ſcruple of diſburdening all that paſſed in his heart in relation to his paſſion for Syrenia. From this faithful friend ſhe learned, that though it was not to be doubted but that Leontine was as much in love with her as man could be, yet the great reſpect and reverence he had for his father would not permit him to think of venturing on a thing of ſo much conſequence as marriage, without having firſt obtained his conſent and approbation of the woman he made choice of for a wife; and that, to this end, he had already ſent two letters to his father, who lived entirely in the country; but the anſwers he received not being quite ſo ſatisfactory as he wiſhed, he had wrote a third, dictated in the moſt paſſionate and preſſing terms.

She could not avoid being under ſome very uneaſy apprehenſions on the ſcore of this old gentleman, and alſo feared that the paſſion Leontine was inſpired with might not of itſelf be ſtrong enough to get the better of that obedience owing from him to a father's will; ſhe therefore wiſhed to intereſt his good-nature and generoſity in her favour, and judged that the ſureſt way to ſecure his affection was to make him a confidant of her's. But the means of accompliſhing this was a difficulty ſhe knew not preſently how to get over. To confeſs by word of mouth ſhe loved him, ſeemed too great a breach of modeſty, eſpecially as his courtſhip to her had not yet been of any long continuance; and to get him informed of it by Delia ſhe thought would be the ſame thing, as he would doubtleſs imagine it was not done without her privity and conſent; beſides, ſhe knew not whether that lady would approve of ſuch a ſtep. Being one day deſired by him to favour him with a tune on her ſpinnet, ſhe entertained him with an air out of the opera of Arſinoe, the firſt in the Italian taſte ever exhibited on the Engliſh ſtage, and, in my opinion, has been exceeded by none that have come after it. The words ſhe ſung to her inſtrument were theſe—

'Wanton zephyrs, ſoftly blowing,
'Watching, catching, whiſpering, going,
'Bear in ſighs my ſoul away:
'Tell Ormondo what I feel,
'Tell him how his chains I wear,
'Tell him all my grief and care;
'Gently ſtealing,
'And revealing,
'More of love than I can ſay.'

But though Leontine extolled both the muſick and the voice which gave it utterance, yet he ſhewed no indication of imagining ſhe had any deſign of flattering his paſſion in the choice ſhe made of this ſong. This making her perceive ſhe muſt be more explicit, her fertile invention ſoon preſented her with a ſtratagem, which pleaſing her fancy at the ſame time that it promiſed the ſucceſs ſhe aimed at, ſhe put into immediate execution. It was this—Having a natural talent for poetry, ſhe ſat down at her eſcritoire, took pen, ink, and paper, and, without being at the pains of much ſtudy, wrote the following lines—

'THE BREATHINGS OF A LOVE-
'SICK HEART.

'Wit, manly beauty, every grace combine,
'To deck the youth I love with charms
'divine.
'But, ah! my too uncautious heart take
'heed,
'Nor with gay hopes the growing paſſion
'feed.
'Wealth's the chief idol that mankind
'adore,
'The ſovereign power they all fall down
'before;
'My niggard fortune does that charm deny,
'And love alone will not it's wants ſupply:
'Let me then guard each avenue to my
'breaſt,
'And bar all entrance to this dangerous
'gueſt;
'Leſt, by indulging the preſumptuous flame,
'I fall the victim of deſpair and ſhame:
'But, oh! 'tis vain!—the god of love con-
'ſpires

'To

' To aid my Leontine with all his fires;
' Speaks in his voice, and ſparkles in his
' eyes;
' And what he ſweetly forces, juſtifies.
' 'Tis ſure determin'd in the book of fate;
' I muſt adore, ev'n though he proves un-
' grate.'

This paper, which ſhe wanted him to believe was a ſincere confeſſion of the whole ſecret of her ſoul, ſhe contrived ſhould fall into his hands in ſuch a manner as ſhould have too much the appearance of chance to be liable to any ſuſpicion of deſign. At his next viſit, her maid being well inſtructed by her how to act, ran haſtily into the room, and told her that the man whom ſhe had ordered to come for his money was below. Syrenia affected not to underſtand what ſhe meant, and cried—

Syrenia. What man? What money?

Maid. Mr. Shapely, Madam, your ſtaymaker.

Syrenia. Oh, now I remember I did bid him come for his money. He takes a ſtrange unſeaſonable time. People ſhould always come in a morning on theſe affairs. However, I'll ſee if I can find his bill; and do you carry a pen and ink into the parlour, that he may write me a receipt on the back of it.

On this the maid withdrew, and Syrenia opened a little deſk that ſtood in the dining-room, and beginning to tumble over ſome writings ſhe had there, as in ſearch of the pretended bill, dexterouſly ſlipped from among the reſt the paper which contained the above recited verſes, and let it fall to the ground without ſeeming to obſerve that any thing was dropped; then ſaying ſhe had found what ſhe had looked for, ſhut up the deſk in a great hurry, begged Leontine would excuſe her abſence for a few moments, and went down ſtairs. She was no ſooner gone, than Leontine, happening to caſt his eyes that way, ſaw the paper, and took it up, as I ſuppoſe with no other intention than to deliver it to Syrenia when ſhe ſhould return; but it being purpoſely folded in ſuch a manner that part of the writing appeared on the outſide, he muſt have been ſtrangely incurious indeed, if ſeeing it a poem, and wrote in his miſtreſs's hand, he had forbore examining it. Never was any tranſport more viſible than in the countenance of Leontine while reading theſe deluſive ſtanzas: his look put me in mind of the poet's words—

' Kindneſs has reſiſtleſs charms,
' All things elſe but faintly warms;
' It gilds the lover's ſervile chain,
' And makes the ſlave grow pleas'd and
' vain.'

Though, by the particulars I have been repeating, the reader will eaſily ſuppoſe I was both an eye and an ear witneſs of them, yet it is utterly impoſſible for me to deſcribe either the looks or attitude of the one or the other, in the joyous ſurprize of finding himſelf, as he imagined, thus extremely dear to the only woman to whom he wiſhed to be ſo. She took care to ſtay ſo long below, as to give him time to read over, more than once, what ſhe intended for his peruſal. It was ſtill in his hands when ſhe returned; but ſhe ſeemed to take no notice of it, and was beginning to apologize for her abſence, by laying the blame on the impertinence of her ſtaymaker; but Leontine, with a geſture full of rapture, interrupted her, ſaying—

Leontine. O, Madam, you muſt allow me to become an advocate for this honeſt tradeſman, ſince by his fortunate detaining you I am made the happieſt of mankind.

To this Syrenia, affecting not to comprehend the meaning of what he ſaid, replied with a ſmile—

Syrenia. What riddle is this you are about to poſe me with? I am the dulleſt creature in the world at giving a ſolution to theſe things.

Leontine. This paper, Madam, wafted to me by the god of love's own hand, has given me the wiſhed-for opportunity of proving myſelf leſs unworthy of the bleſſing I aſpire to, than your doubts ſuggeſt. No, my charming Syrenia, not all the treaſures in the world could add one ray of luſtre to the graces of your mind and perſon; 'tis thoſe alone I covet to enjoy, and in poſſeſſing them ſhall be more rich than in poſſeſſing both the Indies.

While he was thus ſpeaking, Syrenia caſt her eyes upon the paper, and bluſhed exceſſively; partly, perhaps, through ſhame, but more through the pleaſure which diffuſed itſelf through all her veins on perceiving, by the behaviour of Leontine,

ontine, how well the ſucceſs of her plot had anſwered to the intention of it. The well-diſſembled confuſion ſhe was in was an excuſe for her not ſpeaking; and Leontine went on to aſſure her, in the moſt tender terms, that no conſideration whatever ſhould have the power to oblige him to withdraw that firm affection he now vowed to her; and that he hoped a very little time would put a final period to all her apprehenſions on that ſcore. What farther converſation paſſed between them at this time I ſhall forbear to repeat, as it may be eaſily gueſſed at; and proceed to the conduct of Syrenia in regard to her other lover, who the reader may think I have too long neglected.

The buſineſs which called Roſſano into the country detained him there much longer than he had expected; and an unlucky fall from his horſe, the very day before he intended to ſet out for London, occaſioned a ſecond delay to his journey. This abſence of his gave Syrenia a full opportunity of entertaining her new lover, though ſhe received every poſt a letter from the former, all which ſhe did not fail to anſwer with that tenderneſs which might be expected from a woman who had promiſed to be his wife; ſtill keeping cloſe to her firſt maxim, not to give any umbrage to the one, till ſhe was perfectly ſecure of the other. All impediments, however, being at laſt removed, that gentleman arrived in town on the ſame day that Syrenia and Leontine were engaged in the manner above recited. His impatience to ſee his beloved miſtreſs carried him immediately to her lodgings: he came while his rival was with her; but her maid, well knowing how improper it was that they ſhould meet, told him her lady was abroad; on which he went away, ſaying he would return in the evening, as he knew ſhe was not accuſtomed to ſtay late from home.

He was doubtleſs much diſappointed, but not at all ſuſpicious of the cauſe; till having croſſed the ſtreet, he happened to caſt his eyes back upon the houſe, either by chance, or poſſibly through fondneſs of the place which contained the idol of his wiſhes. Syrenia was ſitting in the window, and Leontine very near to her. Roſſano had a full view of both; but Syrenia was too earneſt in diſcourſe to obſerve him, though he ſtood motionleſs on the ſpot where he was for ſome minutes. It ſeemed not ſtrange to him that a gentleman ſhould be with her, though he could find no way to account why he ſhould be denied acceſs to her but one, which ſtung him to the ſoul. He was more than once tempted by his jealouſy, as I afterwards diſcovered, to return, and demand of the maid a reaſon for his having been refuſed admittance; but ſecond thoughts prevailed, and he went home, to deliberate how it would beſt become him to behave in ſuch a circumſtance.

Leontine ſtaid ſupper; and Syrenia ſtepping out of the room to give ſome neceſſary orders to her maid, was informed by her that Roſſano had been there, and the meſſage he had left. This greatly diſconcerted her; but, after a little pauſe, ſhe recovered herſelf enough to give theſe directions—'This is very unlucky! 'Leontine will probably ſtay late: you 'you muſt therefore tell Roſſano that I 'am not yet come home, and that you 'believe I am gone to the play.' The maid punctually obeying theſe directions, Roſſano only replied that, ſince it had happened ſo, he would do himſelf the honour to breakfaſt with her lady the next morning; and then departed, ſeemingly well ſatisfied. But though he forbore giving any indications of his jealouſy to this girl, he doubted not but that the ſecond repulſe was owing to the ſame motive the firſt had been. Reſolving, however, to be more fully convinced, he poſted his ſervant, whom he had brought with him for that purpoſe, under a lamp a few doors from the houſe where Syrenia lodged, charging him to obſerve carefully who came in or out; and if he ſaw a gentleman in black velvet and a bag wig, to follow him wherever he went, find out his name if poſſible, and bring him an exact account.

Leontine was ſo much charmed with the diſcovery he had made of Syrenia's affection, that he quitted her apartment not till the night was far advanced. Roſſano's ſervant, however, kept cloſe to his ſtand, till a chair being called, he ſaw the gentleman his maſter had deſcribed go into it. He followed; and as ſoon as Leontine had entered the houſe where he lodged, and the door was ſhut, aſked the chairmen if they knew the gentleman they had carried; but they anſwering in the negative, and he ſeeing no houſe open where he might enquire, could learn nothing farther that night; but early the next morning he went again,

again, and had the addreſs to find out all the particulars that could be expected from him.

Roſſano was now aſſured not only that he had a rival, but alſo a rival highly favoured by his miſtreſs. The diſtraction he was in may eaſily be conceived; but he diſſembled it on his firſt approach to Syrenia, whom he did not fail to viſit the next morning, as he had told her maid. Syrenia, before ſhe was informed of it, knowing very well, that miſſing ſeeing her that night, he would not let another day paſs over without coming, had the artifice to tell Leontine ſhe was obliged to go ſome few miles out of town to ſee a relation who ſhe heard was dangerouſly ill.

I am not a perſon who live without having ſome buſineſs in the world, yet there are few things of conſequence enough to me to have detained me from being a witneſs of what paſſed in this interview between Roſſano and Syrenia, and ſhall preſent my readers with it as recorded in my faithful Tablets. Syrenia no ſooner heard he was there, than ſhe ran to the top of the ſtair-caſe to receive him, and with the greateſt ſhew of tenderneſs ſaluted him in theſe terms—

Syrenia. My dear Roſſano, how grieved have I been for loſing the ſight of you laſt night, after having been ſo long an age of time deprived of it!

Roſſano. The misfortune, Madam, was wholly mine; for while I moaned your abſence, you doubtleſs found ſomething to amuſe and entertain you. I heard you were at the play.

Syrenia. I was ſo: but what could I find there to compenſate for the ſatisfaction I miſſed by being ſo unluckily from home!

Roſſano, Were you at Covent Garden?

Syrenia. No, at Drury Lane. But why do you aſk?

Roſſano. Only for a fooliſh fancy.

Syrenia. Nay, I may anſwer myſelf that queſtion. I will lay my life you went in ſearch of me. But I choſe to go in a diſhabille, and ſat on the back bench in Burton's box; ſo it was impoſſible for you to ſee me

Roſſano. Not ſo impoſſible as you imagine, Madam. But I had no need to go to either of the theatres; the object I ſo much languiſhed to behold preſented itſelf to me without my taking any pains.

Theſe words occaſioned a viſible change in her countenance; ſhe bluſhed exceſſively, caſt her eyes upon the ground, and had not power to lift them up while ſhe ſaid only—

Syrenia. What is it you mean?

Roſſano. There needs no explanation: the diſorder you in vain endeavour to conceal, ſhews but too much how well you are acquainted with my meaning. Ah, Syrenia, Syrenia! how did I once flatter myſelf with an aſſurance that your heart was mine, inviolably mine; but now I find my abſence has been fatal to me!

Syrenia. Forbear to talk thus. Theſe ſuſpicions are unjuſt to me, and cruel to yourſelf.

Roſſano. Why, then, was I laſt night turned from your door? Why twice repulſed, while my more happy rival was allowed the privilege of entertaining you till midnight?

Syrenia. Who tells you this?

Roſſano. My own eyes, Madam, were my firſt intelligencers. I ſaw you at that window; ſaw alſo your new favourite; and eaſily judged, by both your attitudes, what was the ſubject of your converſation. As to the reſt, I was informed of it by means to which I afterwards had recourſe.

The falſe Syrenia was now abſolutely confounded. There was no giving the lye to ocular demonſtration as to the firſt part of Roſſano's charge againſt her; but ſhe endeavoured to avoid the latter, by ſaying—

Syrenia. Well, Sir, I own I was at home, and had ordered myſelf to be denied; but expected not your coming, or knew you had been here till after you were gone. As for the gentleman you ſaw with me, 'tis your own jealous fancy alone that makes you regard him in the light of a lover.

Roſſano. I grant you did not expect me; but as your ſervant is no ſtranger to the footing we are upon, ſhe would certainly have looked on me as an exception to the general order you had given, if ſhe had not known I was no proper perſon to join in the company you had above: beſides, you cannot plead ignorance of my ſecond viſit, yet I was again turned back.

Syrenia. You wrong me: I proteſt I never heard of your being here till I was going to bed. Think no more, therefore, of ſuch idle ſtuff: this is not

discourse for two people who love, and have so long been absent from each other.

Rossano. Ah, Syrenia! I wish the treatment I have received would allow me to entertain you with any other. There was a time when I could be as gay, perhaps, as he who now supplants me in your esteem.

Syrenia. Still harping on the same string? Remember what the poet says—

'No signs of love in jealous men remains,
'But that which sick men have of life, their pains.'

She had just done repeating these lines, when the tea-equipage was brought in for breakfast; and Rossano, who I could perceive by his countenance was little pleased with the trifling answers she had made to his reproaches, rose up to take his leave; on which she suddenly catched hold of his hand, and, with a well-counterfeited tenderness in her voice and eyes, said to him—

Syrenia. You will not go and leave me in this humour?

Rossano. Indeed I must. I have this moment thought of a business that requires immediate dispatch.

Syrenia. Shall I then see you in the afternoon?

Rossano. I cannot promise.

He was half way down stairs while speaking these last words; and though she followed him two or three steps, and called to him to stay, he turned not, nor even looked back upon her, but went hastily out of the house. I was resolved to see what was his intent, and accompanied him to the house of that kinswoman where he had first seen Syrenia. He was beginning to tell her what cause of complaint he had against that lady, but she stopped his mouth, by saying that she was already acquainted with every thing he had to relate; and then proceeded to inform him, that having a friend who lived opposite to Syrenia, she had learned that she entertained a new lover, who visited her almost every day, and that the neighbourhood believed it would very shortly be a match. Rossano went from this relation to his own lodgings; where, having vented some part of his rage in exclamations on the levity and ingratitude of womankind, he sat down and wrote the following lines to Leontine—

'SIR,

'YOU have endeavoured to supplant 'me in the affection of the woman I loved, and am engaged to 'marry; I need not tell you I mean 'Syrenia. I expect, therefore, you 'will either resign all pretensions to her 'under your own hand, or give such satisfaction as one gentleman has a right 'to demand from another in these cases. 'I shall attend you behind Montague 'House at eight to-morrow morning; 'till when, yours,

'ROSSANO.'

This he sent immediately to Leontine; who happening to be at home, returned an answer by the bearer in these terms—

'SIR,

'I Own myself a lover of Syrenia, but 'know nothing of your courtship 'to her, nor will believe she is under 'any engagement of the nature you 'mention, either to you or any other 'man; and shall be so far from resigning my pretensions, that I will defend 'them to the last moment of my life: 'you may therefore rely on my meeting 'you at the time and place appointed. 'Yours,

'LEONTINE.'

Rossano had scarce finished reading this billet, when a porter brought him a letter from Syrenia, the contents whereof were these—

'MY VERY DEAR ROSSANO,

'YOUR behaviour this morning has 'thrown me into disquiets which 'might excite compassion in a heart less 'devoted to me than I flattered myself 'yours was. I thought the love between us was established on a more solid basis, than to be shook by every puff 'of jealous caprice; I doubt not but to 'convince you that yours is no other. 'If this is so lucky as to find you at 'home, or you receive it time enough, I 'beg to see you this evening; for I can'not bear you should pass another night 'in such cruel suspicions of your faithfully affectionate

'SYRENIA.'

I perceived he was in some dilemma on reading this billet; he paused awhile, then said—'My compliments to the la'dy, and——' Then paused again; at last

laſt cried—'Tell her I am engaged 'this day, but will wait on her to-'morrow.'

Various reflections ſeemed now rolling in the mind of this much-abuſed lover; but I left him in them, and contented myſelf with going the next morning to the field of battle, in order to ſee how the combatants would behave. They were both ſo punctual to the time, that it is hard to ſay which of them was firſt within the liſts. Roſſano, however, having ſome idea of Leontine, as he had ſeen him through Syrenia's window, advanced towards him, and ſaid—

Roſſano. I gueſs, Sir, you are the gentleman I invited hither.

Leontine. You are not deceived, Sir, if your name be Roſſano.

Roſſano. The ſame, Sir.

Leontine. Mine, then, is Leontine; and you find me ready to maintain my pretenſions to the fair Syrenia.

Roſſano. And I to aſſert that right which a long ſeries of encouraged courtſhip and mutual vows has given me.

Leontine. This, then, is the way we muſt diſpute the prize.

Both their ſwords were already drawn; and Roſſano, either through ſuperior ſkill or better fortune, gave his antagoniſt a ſlight wound in the ſide on the firſt paſs, and on the ſecond a much deeper on the right-arm; which occaſioning a great effuſion of blood, he was obliged to drop his ſword; on which the other, imagining the miſchief to be greater than it really proved, ſtepped haſtily towards him, with theſe words—'Sir, though I 'might expect the juſtice of my cauſe 'would give me ſome advantage over 'you, I ſhould be extremely ſorry to 'find it attended with any bad effects; I 'beg, therefore, as there are ſcarce any 'chairs abroad ſo early, you will give 'me leave to ſupport you to my lodg-'ings, which are very near, and where 'you may have immediate aſſiſtance.'

Leontine accepted the offer. A ſurgeon was immediately called, and his cloaths ſtripped off in order to have his wounds examined: that on his ſide was not at all deep; and that on his arm happening not to be near any tendon, required little more than a tight bandage for it's cure. He was adviſed, however, to drink ſome mulled wine, and then endeavour to compoſe himſelf to ſleep for a few hours. Roſſano, with a great deal of humanity and politeneſs, took care to ſee this injunction performed; and, on Leontine's requeſting it, ſent to his lodging for freſh cloaths and linen for him to put on when he ſhould awake.

As Roſſano was retiring, to leave his gueſt to that repoſe which was thought needful for him, he ſaw a paper lying on the floor, which he took up, not knowing but it was ſomething belonging to himſelf; but how great was his amazement when he found what it contained, this being the very verſes Syrenia had wrote on Leontine, and had fortuitouſly been ſhook out of that gentleman's pocket as his cloaths were haſtily thrown to the other ſide of the room. Till now, the love he had bore Syrenia kept him from entertaining any worſe opinion of her conduct, than that it was the vanity incident to her ſex, which alone had made her encourage the addreſſes of Leontine; but this plain proof of her inconſtancy gave a ſudden turn to his ſentiments, and changed at once all the tenderneſs he ever had for her into contempt and hatred. Leontine alſo had ſome uneaſy thoughts on the ſcore of Syrenia; Roſſano ſeemed to him to be a man of too much honour to aſſert a falſhood; and began to fear that himſelf had been deceived in his opinion of that lady's ſincerity. Being leſs inclined to ſleep than to be ſatisfied in this point, he rung a bell which hung by the bedſide; on which Roſſano, who was no farther than the next room, went in, and aſked how he did; to which he replied—

Leontine. So well, that I think I need lie here no longer than till my man brings me ſome clean apparel, that I may riſe with decency. In the mean time, Sir, ſhould take it as a favour you would let me know how far I have been guilty of injuſtice to you in regard of Syrenia. In your billet to me, you mention an engagement: if it be ſo, I was perfectly ignorant of it, and, at that time, imagined I had ſtrong reaſons for diſbelieving it; otherwiſe, I do aſſure you, Sir, not all my paſſion for that lady ſhould have made me attempt to diſunite your loves.

Roſſano. Though it may ſeem ungenerous to boaſt a lady's favours, as I have no other way to juſtify my rash proceedings towards you, be pleaſed to read that letter.

In ſpeaking this, he preſented to Leontine the letter he had received from Syrenia

renia the day before; which that gentleman had no ſooner looked over, than he cried out, with the greateſt ſurprize—

Leontine. Good Heaven! Why this was dated but yeſterday!

Roſſano. Yes, Sir; and wrote on account of my reſtifying ſome jealouſy on your being with her the evening before. But I have now done with that idle paſſion, and can now reſign my claim with as much calmneſs as I would lately have maintained it with eagerneſs.

Leontine. Is it poſſible you can be in earneſt!

Roſſano. Were Syrenia more beautiful than ſhe is, the enjoyment of her perſon, without her heart, could give me no happineſs; and had this paper, which accidentally fell from your pocket in the hurry this morning, happened ſooner into my hands, I ſhould not have proceeded as I have done.

In ſpeaking this, he gave Leontine the paper he had taken up: the other immediately ſaw what it was; and, receiving it with a ſmile, made this reply—'I thank you, Sir; but I aſſure 'you I am not at all vain of theſe 'verſes, as they ſerve only to prove that 'the lady was willing to be double 'armed; and in caſe one lover ſhould 'fail, to be provided with another.'

After this they began to enter into a very free diſcuſſion on the conduct of Syrenia towards them both; and there now appeared ſo much deceit, mean artifice, ingratitude, and perfidy, as well to the one as the other, that it is hard to ſay which of them entertained the moſt deſpicable notions of her: in fine, they agreed to reſent the impoſitions ſhe had practiſed on them in ſuch a manner as ſome of my fair readers, how greatly ſoever they may condemn Syrenia, will not, perhaps, eaſily abſolve them for.

The ſervant of Leontine being arrived with the things his maſter had ordered to be brought, that gentleman roſe, and got himſelf dreſſed; and Roſſano in the mean time employed himſelf in gathering up all the letters he had received from Syrenia, and made them up in a large packet, and wrote on the cover—

'Amorous billets from a lady of a very 'extraordinary character.'

They went in two chairs to the houſe where Syrenia lodged; and the door being opened, ruſhed up ſtairs without any ceremony, and even into the dining-room where ſhe was ſitting. Leontine was the firſt that entered: ſhe roſe to receive him; but ſeeing his arm in a ſcarf, cried out—

Syrenia. Oh, Sir! what accident has befallen you?

Leontine. No unlucky one, Madam. I have indeed received two ſlight wounds on your account; but I bleſs the hand that gave them, ſince they have been the means of curing one of a more dangerous nature in my heart.

She had no time to aſk what he meant by theſe words; Roſſano was now in the room, and rejoined to what the other had ſaid in this manner—

Roſſano. My heart is alſo in a pretty good condition too; for though I have loſt a miſtreſs, I have gained a friend, from whom I have reaſon to hope more ſincerity. You ſee, Madam, two perſons together, whom doubtleſs you wiſhed to keep ſeparate, while we had ſeparate intereſts: but we have now agreed; and as we lately joined to perſecute you with our addreſſes, now join in the reſolution of troubling you no more.

Leontine. I have nothing to add, Madam, to what my friend has delivered, but to reſtore this paper; which can be of no uſe to me, and may be of ſome to you; as, change but the name, the picture may ſuit ſome happier man.

Roſſano. And I return thoſe letters you have from time to time favoured me with.

He then laid down the packet, at the ſame time Leontine did the verſes, upon a table. Syrenia was all this while immoveable as a ſtatue: ſhe had found, from their firſt entrance, that they had compared notes; that ſhe was expoſed, her arts laid open, and her hopes irrecoverably loſt with both. Fain would ſhe have ſpoke, but had not power; and all ſhe could utter at laſt was—

Syrenia. Mighty well!—So, then, I am to be inſulted?

Roſſano. No, Madam, your birth and beauty are your protection; and had your mind been equal to either, neither of us, I believe, would have broke his chain, or even wiſhed to regain that liberty

Plate IV

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liberty we now have ſo much cauſe to triumph in.

Leontine. Come, Sir, you ſee the lady is diſconcerted: let us leave her to meditate on this adventure; it may be of ſervice in ſome future one.

Roſſano. With all my heart.—A good huſband to you, Madam.

Leontine. I join in the ſame wiſh.—Your ſervant, Madam.

They departed with theſe words, and I ſtaid not long after them; the ſight of Syrenia's deſpair, how juſtly ſoever ſhe had brought it on herſelf, giving more pain than ſatisfaction.

END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

THE

INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

CONTAINS A VERY BRIEF DETAIL OF SUCH OCCURRENCES AS PRESENTED THEMSELVES TO THE AUTHOR'S OBSERVATION IN AN EVENING'S INVISIBLE RAMBLE THROUGH SEVERAL PARTS OF THIS METROPOLIS.

IT has often been a matter of very great concern to me, and I believe muſt be the ſame to every thinking mind, to ſee how ſome people are continually hurried and buſied about mere trifles, of no manner of conſequence to themſelves, or ſcarce to any body elſe; while all the duties of religion, all the regard for the welfare of their moſt particular friends, all love of country, and even the deareſt intereſts of their own families, are totally neglected. What judgment can we form of a perſon of this caſt, but that he has a vacuum in his head ready to be filled up with the firſt toy that preſents itſelf; and not being endowed with a ſtrength of reaſon ſufficient to direct his choice, ſuffers himſelf to be engroſſed by ſuch things as he finds make moſt noiſe in the world, not ſuch as have moſt relation to his own affairs, either as to fortune or reputation?

Can there be a ſight more farcical than for a man who, without any petition to prefer, or ſuit to ſolicit; in fine, without any call or buſineſs whatſoever, is continually cringing at the levee of a miniſter of ſtate; and, when the compliments are paid, and the circle is diſmiſſed, runs through the whole round of his acquaintance, reporting where he has been and what he has ſeen, ſagaciouſly remarking on every nod, wink, or ſmile, of the great man, and finding myſtery even in the tye of his wig, or the looſe or ſtrait buttoning his coat?

Another, whoſe affairs at home perhaps are involved in the utmoſt perplexities, ſhall paſs the beſt part of his time among the jobbers in 'Change Alley, go from coffee-houſe to coffee-houſe, enquire of every broker he meets with the price of ſtocks, in which he has no ſhare, or money to purchaſe any; and be more ſolicitous in finding out the uſes to which the Sinking-fund is appropriated, than for the means of extricating himſelf out of his preſent difficulties.

A third values himſelf much upon being a great connoiſſeur in politicks, regiſters all the publick papers from year to year, pretends to reconcile all the contradictions

tradictions they contain, and to discover some latent meaning in every paragraph; and takes more pains to unriddle their imaginary ænigmas, than a poor servitor at the university does to translate Perseus for a rich student who pays, and fathers the labour of his brain.

Others have a taste for building, are extremely curious in ornamenting the structures they cause to be erected with carvings, paintings, and such like superficial beauties; but never once examine how the foundation is laid, or whether the pompous outworks may not be liable to sink very soon into a heap of rubbish. Some employ their whole cares on the breeding and well managing their horses, hounds, and game-cocks, leaving the education of their sons entirely unregarded.

Impossible is it to enumerate the various trifles with which too many, even among the highest class of life, suffer themselves not only to be amused, but wholly taken up; but I think, without any danger of being accused of too much severity, one may justly say, with Shakespeare, of such men, that—

'The earth has bubbles, as the water
'hath,
'And these are some of them.'

In a word, 'Much Ado about Nothing,' is a play so universally acted in this town, that one can go to very few places without being witness of some scenes of it. As insignificant, however, as these people may seem by the description I have given of them, and as in effect they really are, they are yet of more consequence to the publick than is generally believed, or than they themselves, with all the stock of vanity they are usually possessed of, are capable of imagining. This, though it may be thought a paradox, will be easy for me to make appear; as thus—These unjudging creatures, for I have already proved them to be such, are frequently made the tools by which evil and designing men fashion out their ends. When those in power have any thing on foot from which they find it necessary to divert the attention of the nation, it is but throwing out some whisper, though of ever so absurd and ridiculous a nature, among the people I am speaking of, and they will immediately ring it in the ears of the populace till it becomes the cry, and every argument that truth and reason can alledge is deafened with the noise.

An experience of many years, joined with a diligent observation of the world, has convinced me, beyond all doubt, that these inconsiderates, without being sensible of the mischief they do, have been, and daily are, the instruments of propagating the most infamous scandals, gross falsities, and base aspersions, on the great and good; as also the most ridiculous and idle stories, invented and calculated by men of more thinking heads, to amuse and divert the attention of the publick from what most demands it's regard. A glaring instance of this latter kind now takes up the town; all mouths are full of it, all ears open to it: but it appears to me that there are few eyes clear enough to discern the secret ground-work of this mountain of absurdities, and on what motive it was erected. I think it not my province, however, nor shall presume to inform the judgment of any one in this point; but shall only relate a passage I happened to be witness of, which every one is at liberty to descant upon as he shall think proper.

Being one day on the other side of the Royal Exchange, where some business I had there being dispatched sooner than I expected, it came into my head to call in at a certain celebrated coffee-house, which I had been told was frequented by a great number of the most eminent and wealthy citizens; but as I had no acquaintance with them, and some other more substantial reasons for not appearing in *propria persona*, I chose to go in my Invisible capacity. Pursuant to this resolution, I stepped into the first obscure alley I could find, and there girded on my precious Belt; which, as well as my Tablets, I seldom went out without taking with me, and then hastened to the place I mentioned.

I found the room very full of company, most of whom were of that sect of dissenters from the established church which are under the denomination of Presbyterians. I would not here be understood to mean any thing in ridicule of those gentlemen; for I love and revere every man of real virtue and good sense, be he of what persuasion soever. How far the persons I have just now occasion to speak of answer to either of these characters I will not pretend to say; let their own words testify. I shall, according to

to the phraſe of the inſpired writer, ſet a guard upon my mouth, that I offend not with my lips. But to proceed—

Three or four, who I afterwards perceived were leading men among them, were engaged in a very warm diſpute with a gentleman, who endeavoured, with a great deal of ſpirit, to expoſe the groſs abſurdities and falſhood of a cauſe they took upon them to maintain, and with a kind of magiſterial air attempted to enforce the belief of in others. The odds appeared to me at firſt, I confeſs, a little ungenerous; but I was the more ſtrengthened in this opinion, when I heard the manner in which they delivered their arguments, and that were urged in favour of one of the moſt prepoſterous and ridiculous complaints that ever engaged the attention of any men of common ſenſe. After ſaying this, I think it is needleſs to add, it was the affair of Squires and Canning. As I am utterly unacquainted with the names either of thoſe who defended the cauſe of the latter, or of him who treated it with contempt, I ſhall diſtinguiſh the one by that of Aſſertors, and the other by that of Opponent. The converſation which paſſed on both ſides, after I had got a convenient place to poſt myſelf, and had ſpread my Tablets, I ſhall give the publick a faithful tranſcript of, as taken from thoſe unerring teſtimonies, and was as the reader will find underwritten.

Firſt Aſſertor. I am ſurprized, Sir, you ſhould rack your brain for arguments againſt the cauſe of helpleſs innocence and virtue in diſtreſs.

Second Aſſertor. 'Tis barbarous! 'tis cruel! Where ſhall we find an object of compaſſion, if Betty Canning is not one? We know her, Sir.

Third Aſſertor. Aye, ſhe is of our congregation; has always been a diligent frequenter of the meeting-houſe, and fervent in her devotions.

Opponent. So, becauſe ſhe is of your congregation, it naturally follows ſhe muſt be chaſte; the lambs of your flock never go aſtray. But I forbear to make any reflection on this ſcore, and ſhall only ſay, I never ſhall give credit to a ſtory ſo full of inconſiſtencies and improbabilities as this which has been forged by her and her accomplices.

Firſt Aſſertor. Sir, there is no reaſoning againſt fact. She has ſworn to the truth of it before a magiſtrate, and that magiſtrate has teſtified his belief of it.

Opponent. Yes, the ſtory ſhe told was romantick; it ſuited his taſte; he thought it might be a proper ſubject to work up into a farce or puppet-ſhew; ſo was willing to promote the credibility of it.

Firſt Aſſertor. Mere ſpite and ſcandal.

Opponent. Not at all: and I doubt not but the impoſition will be fully laid open by another magiſtrate, ſuperior in every degree to him who takes her part.

Firſt Aſſertor. Sir, it is profane and impious in him, or you, or any man, to eſpouſe the cauſe of a wicked old hag, a vagabond, a gipſey, ſuch as Mary Squires; and a known inſtrument of libidinous pleaſures, ſuch as Mother Wells.

Opponent. Gentlemen, I have nothing to alledge in defence of theſe creatures, but that, however guilty they may have been, or continue to be, in other reſpects, they are entirely innocent in this they are accuſed of.

Firſt Aſſertor. No, no; 'tis impoſſible.

Opponent. Saying a thing does not prove it to be ſo. But give me leave only to offer a few queries, in relation to ſome of the many inconſiſtencies in the tale told by that idle wench Betty Canning.

Second Aſſertor. Do ſo; we ſhall know how to anſwer them.

Opponent. Firſt, then, ſuppoſing her to have been robbed, in the manner ſhe pretends, by two ruffians, what could induce fellows who live upon the ſpoil, after having taken from her all they found worth taking, to quit the purſuit of other booty, and loſe their time in dragging her into the country, only to throw her into the houſe, and then leave her there; for ſhe does not accuſe them of making any attempt upon her chaſtity?

Firſt Aſſertor. As to that, it is highly probable they might be feed by Mother Wells to bring the firſt young woman they could meet with to her houſe, in order to be made a ſacrifice to her mercenary views, and the luſt of ſome vile fellow.

Opponent. Then they would certainly have choſen an object of a more tempting aſpect, or would have deſerved little for their pains: but let that paſs. If it were as you imagine, would any woman, who it is ſaid has long been in practice in the ſeducing trade, have behaved

haved towards the prey brought into her clutches in the fashion she did to Betty Canning? Would she not rather have soothed the frighted maid, revived her drooping spirits with good eating and drinking, promised her fine cloaths, and then introduced some man to her, who might have allured her to the sin she aimed to make her guilty of? Surely the way to tempt her to be a prostitute was not to lock her up alone in a wild, desolate room, without a bed to lie upon, or any other refreshment than a little bread and water; such usage, one must think, was intended to mortify, not excite a carnal inclination.

First Assertor. Sir, I am grieved, greatly grieved in spirit, to find you so ignorant of the force of virtue. I tell you, Sir, that the courage and resolution of this virgin struck such an awe into the minds of those profligate wretches she was placed among, that they had not the power of putting their wicked designs in execution: Heaven, indeed, for a trial of her patience, permitted them to distress her helpless innocence, but not to destroy it.

Opponent. Very extraordinary, truly! But pray, Sir, why did this suffering saint remain so long under the roof of such abandoned creatures, since all accounts agree, that in three days, nay, in three hours, after her confinement, she had the same opportunity of making her escape as at the time she pretends to effect it?

Second Assertor. Her eyes were not open to the means of her deliverance till that blessed moment: it was ordained she should undergo the persecution she did, in order to make her virtue more triumphant over sin and shame.

Opponent. Oh, gentlemen, these arguments will never be swallowed any where but in a conventicle.

Third Assertor. Sir, they will always have their due weight with every one but a reprobate.

Opponent. How, Sir!

The Opponent was so much incensed at these words, that he started from his seat, and was about to reply with his fist; but some of the more moderate part of the company interposed, and prevented the mischief that might otherwise have ensued. By their persuasions he sat down again; and the dispute would doubtless have been renewed, it may be with greater vehemence than before, if a drawer from a neighbouring tavern had not luckily come, and told him that two gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, desired to speak with him: on which he went away, perhaps to the great satisfaction of the assertors of Betty Canning's cause; who, if he had staid and continued his queries, might probably have been a little puzzled to find answers to them.

During the debate I have been repeating, every one in the room kept a profound silence; but afterwards the conversation became general; several other subjects were started by particular persons, but they were not listened to: the majority seemed to have their heads so full of Betty Canning, that they could scarce think or speak of any thing beside. It is true, indeed, they did not all give credit to her story; yet the positiveness with which they heard it affirmed, made the least credulous divided in their thoughts, and afraid to pass a judgment either on the one or the other side of the question. The reader will doubtless naturally suppose, that it was impossible for me to live in the world, and have any acquaintance in it, without having heard, long before I came to this place, much talk of Elizabeth Canning, her pitiful distress, miraculous preservation and escape, and all the other prodigies of that amazing story.

It is true, indeed, I was a stranger to no part of it; but then my conversation being chiefly among the gay part of the town, I was not much surprized that people who can find very little to employ their thoughts should be fond of a tale which had so much of the marvellous in it; as children, before they arrive at years capable of being instructed in more solid matters, listen with pleasure to their nurses stories of giants, fairies, and enchanted castles: as such I regarded all they said, and thought no farther of it. But when I heard grave citizens, men of business, of a sedate deportment, and good understanding in other things, argue with serious countenances on such a heap of wild absurdities, I cannot say whether my astonishment or indignation had most dominion over my faculties; but this I know, that both together destroyed all the little stock of patience I am master of, and would not suffer me to stay any longer to listen to

thoſe inſignificant debates which I found were likely to continue among this company.

CHAP. II.

RELATES SOME FARTHER INCIDENTS OF A PRETTY PARTICULAR NATURE, WHICH FELL UNDER THE AUTHOR'S OBSERVATION IN THE SAME EVENING'S INVISIBLE PROGRESSION.

THOSE turbulent emotions which the ſcene I had juſt come from being witneſs of had raiſed in me, being ſomewhat quieted by air and walking, I had the curioſity to call in at another great coffee-houſe, hoping I ſhould find there ſomething to give a turn to the preſent diſpoſition of my mind; but I found that the remains of my ill-humour were not to be ſo ſoon diſſipated as I had imagined. Here was indeed a vaſt deal of company; clerks in publick offices, lawyers, phyſicians, tradeſmen, and ſome few divines, compoſed the promiſcuous aſſembly: but all were engaged on the ſame dirty, draggle-tail ſubject, as one of our news-writers juſtly terms it; the names of Betty Canning, the Gipſey, and Mother Wells, reſounded from each quarter of the crouded room, and the cauſe then depending between theſe creatures made the whole converſation at every table.

Here I would not be at the trouble of opening my Tablets, eaſily perceiving that nothing worthy of being recorded in them, or of communicating to the publick, was likely to enſue; and alſo that the ſmalleſt part of time I ſhould waſte in this company, would be paying too dear for any diſcourſes I ſhould hear from them. Accordingly I left the houſe after having ſtaid there about ſeven minutes; but had not reached the next ſtreet, before a confuſed noiſe behind obliged me to ſtand up in the porch of a door till the hubbub was paſſed by.

The occaſion of this uproar preſently appeared. It was a poor fellow carried on a bier, with very little ſigns of life in him; his face covered with blood, which iſſued from his noſe and mouth; his cloaths torn, that the naked fleſh appeared in many places, but ſo deformed with bruiſes, that it could ſcarce be known, for what it was; a mixed rabble of men, women, and children, followed, ſhouting, hallooing, and crying, it was good enough for him, and that they were glad he had got his reward.

I was ſtartled at ſo much inhumanity, for I thought nothing could excuſe ſuch cruel treatment, though I doubted not but the fellow had been guilty of ſome attrocious crime: but I was ſoon undeceived in this point, and let into the whole affair; which was no other than a quarrel this fellow had entered into on account of Canning.

I had now no deſign in my head, no particular courſe to ſteer; but as I was entirely free from any engagement that evening, and thought it too ſoon to go home, I rambled from one ſtreet to another for a conſiderable time, yet without meeting any one thing ſufficient to tempt my curioſity to make a farther enquiry into. Any obſerving reader may reaſonably imagine, that the little ſatisfaction I had been able to reap in the viſits I had made at the two coffee-houſes I had been already in, would have hindered me from going into another, and indeed I was of that opinion myſelf: but I ſoon found I was miſtaken, and ſo will he; I really ventured into a third; but the motive which excited me to do ſo was this—

As I was paſſing by, I perceived through the windows—for then the candles within were lighted up—ſeveral gentlemen with newſpapers before them, on which they ſeemed to be diſcourſing with each other with a great deal of ſeriouſneſs and gravity. As I have naturally an extreme paſſion for knowing the affairs of the world, thoſe of Europe eſpecially, I thought it highly eligible in me to hear what was ſaid upon them by perſons who had the appearance of ſome underſtanding in them. At the firſt table I came to were ſix or ſeven gentlemen, moſt of whom were ſome way or other concerned in the Britiſh herring-fiſhery: but though they talked very learnedly on the ſubject, it ſuited not my taſte; ſo ſtaid not long with them, but adjourned to the next company. Theſe were merchants; who I found were greatly diſconcerted at an article they had been juſt reading in relation to the ſtrict engagements the French had entered into with the Indians, and the daily incurſions thoſe miſcalled friends and allies made on the Engliſh colonies: but as I cannot pretend to any ſkill in commerce,

commerce, I did not ſpread my Tablets to receive the impreſſion of their diſcourſe; ſo can only ſay, in general, that they made very heavy complaints, and cried out, that if ſpeedy care were not taken to put a ſtop to thoſe proceedings, trade muſt be ruined, and our ſettlements in that part of the world utterly deſtroyed.

The third table was filled with perſons who ſeemed to be of no avocation, nor at all intereſted in any branch of buſineſs or publick affairs, but talked of every thing they had been reading merely as things which afforded matter for converſation. On my joining them, the magnanimity of the Pruſſian monarch was the topick; they extolled his wiſdom, his bravery, his temperance, his clemency, the encouragement he gave to merit wherefoever he found it; and all unanimouſly agreed that he was the father of his people, a bleſſing to the land he governed, and a pattern to his fellow-rulers of the earth. The juſt admiration I ever had of this truly great and moſt amiable prince, excluſive of that regard due to him as ſo near a relation to our gracious ſovereign, would certainly have kept me at that table as long as the company had continued ſpeaking on ſo agreeable a ſubject, if I had not been hurried from it by a propenſity, I believe more or leſs natural to all mankind, that of being moſt eager to explore what is hid from us with moſt care.

I obſerved at a little table, which was placed at one corner of the room, a good diſtance from the others, two elderly perſons, who ſeemed very earneſt in diſcourſe on ſome important and ſecret affair. By the winks, nods, and other ſignificant geſtures, I doubted not but that they were profound politicians, and were diſcuſſing ſome extraordinary tranſaction of the cabinet. Their heads were pretty cloſe together, and they ſpoke in ſo low a voice as to render it impoſſible to be heard by any one except each other: but this precaution had no efficacy when once my wonderful Tablets were diſplayed; which had this excellent property, of receiving the impreſſion of whatever was ſaid within the diſtance of nine yards, though uttered in the moſt ſoft whiſpers. On my drawing near to them, they ſeemed a little impatient for the coming of a perſon who they expected, and who preſently after appeared. As ſoon as he had ſeated himſelf, the following dialogue enſued—

Firſt Man. Oh, Mr. Slycraft, I am glad you are come! We were beginning to think you long.

Slycraft. I am ſomewhat beyond my hour, indeed; but I aſſure you nothing could have made me ſo but the good of the cauſe.

Second Man. Your zeal and diligence are not to be doubted. But let us hear what ſucceſs your endeavours have met with.

Slycraft. Truly not ſo much as I hoped. I do not think there is a more difficult thing in the world than getting people to ſubſcribe: I have been half the town over, and have been able to procure no more than three.

Firſt Man. Then I hope they are fat ones?

Slycraft. Pretty well, as times go. Credulous Woodcock, Eſq. has ſet his name for twenty guineas.

Firſt Man. Very handſome! Five or ſix hundred ſuch as he would do the buſineſs.

Slycraft. Aye; but where ſhall we find them?

Second Man. Well, but who are the others?

Slycraft. Then there is Mr. Simon Gooſly, the haberdaſher, ten guineas; but has promiſed to prevail on ſome friends of his to ſet their names very generouſly.

Second Man. I dare ſay he will do all he can. But have you ſeen Mrs. Waver?

Slycraft. Yes; but ſhe ſtill deſires a little more time to conſider; ſays ſhe will enquire farther into the affair, and hear what her friends think of it: and all I could get from her was an aſſurance, that if ſhe found it proper to ſubſcribe at all, ſhe would not ſet her name for leſs than an hundred pieces.

Firſt Man. Then we may be pretty certain of her; for I know ſhe will be directed by Mr. Cantwell, the Nonconformiſt preacher, who labours all he can to promote the cauſe in queſtion.

Second Man. Have you yet found an opportunity of talking with the orator?

Slycraft. I was with him above an hour; and when I had once convinced him that he ſhould find his account in it, he gave me his word and honour that he

would rant and roar till his chapel echoes in favour of the party.

First Man. That is well. All engines must be set to work, or the town will grow cool on this business, and begin to renew their clamour against the Jew bill, &c. The spirit of the people will have vent on something or another, and you know it behoves us to keep them silent on those scores: nothing ever did it more effectually than this we are upon. But it must be kept up for a time. I could wish, methinks, we had the Wesleys on our side.

Second Man. 'Tis a vain attempt. They are now grown too rich to accept of a small gratuity; and I much question whether their exhortations would answer the expence.

Slycraft. I am of your opinion. Besides, you know there is a person who can influence their congregations as much as any thing they can hear from the pulpit. But I will tell you what I have done to-day; I have engaged a clergyman of the established church to write a pamphlet in behalf of the cause we have in hand.

First Man. A clergyman of the established church employ his pen in behalf of such a cause! Pr'ythee, Slycraft, how didst thou work upon him? It must certainly be by some very extraordinary method.

Slycraft. The promise of a small present at first wrought upon his necessities; but on my telling him who and who were concerned in this business, and the motives which induced them to be so, the hopes of having a good fat living made him wholly ours.

First Man. Admirable!

Second Man. But may we depend upon his secrecy?

Slycraft. Never doubt that, as his own interest is concerned.

First Man. Hitherto things go pretty swimmingly on our side. But let me see the subscription-book: I have received five guineas to-day from Mr. Prim. and must insert his name.

Till now I was at the greatest loss, as it is probable the reader will also be, to know what all this meant, or in whose favour, or on what account, the subscription they talked of was raised; but on Mr. Slycraft's delivering the book to his friend, I looked over the shoulder of the latter as he opened it, and saw, in the first leaf, by way of title-page, these words, wrote in a very fair hand—

'A List of those worthy Persons who 'have subscribed to the Relief of 'Elizabeth Canning.'

The names underwritten were too numerous to be inserted; I shall therefore only say, that the sum of what was raised by their subscription amounted to little less than a thousand pounds. Monstrous abuse of charity! preposterous benevolence! which will hereafter reflect more shame than honour on the bestowers. 'Good God!' said I to myself, 'in an age when numberless, name-'less miseries, abound; when all our 'prisons labour with the weight of 'wretches confined within their walls, 'many for small debts which their ne-'cessities obliged them to contract, and 'some by unjust and malicious prose-'cutions; while every parish, nay almost 'every street, affords objects of real 'distress; while a girl sprung from the 'lowest dregs of the people, bred up to 'toil, a drudge, one of the very meanest 'class of servants, receives donations 'which she as little knows how to make 'a proper use of as to deserve!—a girl 'who, if she had really suffered all she 'pretends to have done, would indeed 'have had a claim to justice against those 'who had wronged her, but none to 'the bounties so lavishly bestowed upon 'her.'

These kind of meditations would doubtless have accompanied me to my own door, if they had not been interrupted, as well as my course towards home, by an unexpected accident, which the reader will find faithfully related in the succeeding chapter.

CHAP. III.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH AN ADVENTURE OF MUCH MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE PUBLICK THAN ANY CONTAINED IN THE TWO LAST FOREGOING CHAPTERS.

THE human heart is liable to many bad propensities, which, if not timely corrected by reason, shoot forth into practice, and become vices. But of these there are two sorts; the one born with

with us, and part of our nature; the other imbibed by the fatal prevalence of example, and rooted in us by cuſtom, which is a ſecond nature. Thoſe born with us, as the indulging them is attended with ſome pleaſure, urge in their defence the unconquerable deſire of gratifying the ſenſes: the luſtful man pleads the warmth of his conſtitution, and the ſtrong allurements of beauty; the ſoul of the ambitious triumphs and exults on every degree of power he gains over his fellow-creatures; the miſer thinks himſelf happy in counting over his bags, and being maſter of a thing that will purchaſe all things elſe; and the epicure feels no care, no ſorrow, while he is emptying the full-charged goblet, and palating the delicious viand. But what has the blaſphemer, the profane ſwearer, or the gameſter, to alledge in his vindication? Theſe are crimes in which nature has no part, nor are the ſenſes any way concerned in them, as they neither excite nor feel any ſatisfaction in them. One might therefore be apt to imagine, that men thus guilty ſinned merely for the ſake of ſinning. But I will not allow myſelf to think that there are many ſo impudently daring; a few diſtinguiſhed perſons will ſerve to bring up a mode, and every one knows that at preſent an indiſcriminate imitation is the reigning folly of the Engliſh nation.

Theſe were reflections which occurred to me after I came home, as I was about to tranſcribe the remaining part of my evening's progreſs out of my precious Tablets. I had ſome farther thoughts on the occaſion, but as they might ſeem more proper for the pulpit than a work of this nature, I ſhall add no more, but proceed to the narrative of that adventure which gave riſe to them.

As I was paſſing, in my way home, through a ſtreet of no very good repute, two perſons, from a little narrow alley, bolted haſtily upon me, to the no ſmall danger of my Inviſibilityſhip, if an agility not very common with me had not that inſtant enabled me to give a ſudden ſpring, by which I avoided the ruſh I muſt otherwiſe have received. They went on before me. The night was extremely dark; neither moon nor ſtars to aſſiſt the viſual ray: but, by the help of ſome candles burning in a ſhop not yet ſhut up, I diſtinguiſhed that the one was very richly dreſſed, and had much the appearance of a man of faſhion; and that the other was a fellow I had often ſeen on many occaſions, and whoſe character I was perfectly acquainted with.

Scarce is there a greater villain to be found in low life: I ſay in low life, becauſe ſhould any perſons in authority, or dignified with titles—which Heaven forbid!—ever appear in this nation, to deſerve ſuch black denominations, their crimes would, like their ranks, be diſtinguiſhed; and, though placed in an orb too high to be reached by the juſt vengeance of their oppreſſed fellow-creatures, would doubtleſs incur what Mr. Addiſon makes Cato prophetically ſay in relation to Julius Cæſar, on his endeavouring to ſubvert the old Roman conſtitution, and become abſolute and perpetual dictator—

'Sure there are bolts in the right-hand of
'Jove,
'Red with uncommon wrath, to blaſt the
'man
'Who owes his greatneſs to his country's
'ruin.'

But to return to my little knave. The wretch is now called Mr. Makeplea; he was formerly ſervant to a lawyer whom I employed in ſeveral affairs I had the misfortune to be engaged in. Living with that gentleman a conſiderable time, he picked up ſome ſcraps of law, and all the terms and phraſes of that abſtruſe ſcience, by rote; knew how to take out a writ, ſet an officer to work, fill up a bail-bond, and procure evidences in a dubious cauſe. With this fund he had the impudence, after his maſter's death, to pretend he had been his clerk; got himſelf entered as an attorney, and has ever ſince practiſed as ſuch. His ſole buſineſs, however, as may be eaſily ſuppoſed, has always been among the very meaneſt ſort of people; fomenting litigious quarrels, and then making them up, after having drained the purſes on both ſides. I could not, therefore, avoid being amazed at ſeeing him in the company I now did; but my wonder ſoon ceaſed on hearing, as I was cloſe at their heels, the following diſcourſe between them—

Makeplea. It is very lucky, Mr. Coaxum, that I happened to be at home when you came. There are ſome of the profeſſion who would have ſcrupled to undertake this buſineſs; but, for my part, I am always ready to venture every thing to ſerve my friends.

Coaxum.

Coaxum. My dear Makeplea, you never loſt any thing, nor ever ſhall, by our fraternity. I know there are ſome who will ſneak their heads out of the collar, and leave their lawyer in the lurch.

Makeplea. Aye, faith, I narrowly eſcaped the pillory once. A vile dog who, after I had procured him three evidences, pretended a panick in his conſcience, threw up his cauſe, and ſuffered himſelf to be nonſuited.

Coaxum. You know we ſcorn ſuch doings. And I can tell you, this will be a pretty good job to you. We drained the fool's pocket of above an hundred pieces before we plaid upon credit; ſo that there is enough in bank to make you a handſome preſent for your trouble.

Makeplea. Well, but concerning this reverſion. I hope he has loſt enough to give an air of juſtice—that is, a *quantum ſufficit*, for the making over his eſtate after the deceaſe of his father?

Coaxum. Upwards of a thouſand pounds; beſides a gold watch and a diamond-ring, which he ſeems to ſet a high value upon. The two laſt Count Cogdy has agreed to ſell him again at a great price; ſo that, all together, the ſum will amount to a ſufficient purchaſe of the reverſion of an eſtate of four hundred a year; eſpecially as the preſent poſſeſſor is not above fifty, and may live a long time. Beſides, we hear the young fellow is going to be married to a woman of fortune; ſo that the deeds may be made redeemable. We do not regard his dirty acres, the ready rhino is what we want; and he may pay the money out of his wife's fortune, and be clear of us again.

Makeplea. Oh, then it will be a mortgage, rather than a ſale. Who are with him?

Coaxum. Only Count Cogdy, Jack Hazard, and Tom Wheedle.

Makeplea. They cannot be witneſſes, as I ſuppoſe they are parties concerned.

Coaxum. We are equal ſharers in the booty; but the money was loſt wholly to the count. However, there will be no want of witneſſes; the landlord of the houſe and his ſon will ſet their hands.

Theſe words brought them to a door, which being opened at the firſt knock by one of the moſt ill-looked fellows that ever diſgraced human nature, they went through a long, dark, narrow paſſage, into a back-parlour; where I accompanied them, and was witneſs of a ſcene ſomewhat like what I remember to have ſeen ſome years ago in a play of Mrs. Centlivre's, called the Gameſter. Count Cogdy, as he was called, ſat leaning his arm upon a table, in a careleſs poſture; Jack Hazard was walking backwards and forwards in the room humming an old tune; a gentleman, whoſe name I had not yet heard, had thrown himſelf acroſs two chairs, with all the tokens of deſpair about him; Tom Wheedle ſtood near him, and, as we came in, was endeavouring to give him ſome conſolation, in theſe terms—'Pr'ythee, dear Cleri-'mont, do not be thus diſconcerted; I 'have loſt as much as you twenty times 'over, and as often recovered it again: 'theſe things will happen to gentlemen 'that play. Fortune, indeed, has been 'againſt you to-night, but may not al-'ways be ſo; one lucky hit at another 'time may bring all back.'

Clerimont made no anſwer, nor ſeemed to regard what he ſaid, till hearing the name of Makeplea, and Count Cogdy beginning to inſtruct him in the buſineſs he was to do, that unfortunate gentleman ſtarted up at once, and ſtaring ſomewhat wildly in the face of Makeplea, cried to him—

Clerimont. Are you the fiend who is to convey my ſoul, that is, my eſtate, into the regions of eternal darkneſs, whence it can never, never more return?

Makeplea. What do you mean, Sir?

Cogdy. The gentleman is only a little out of humour.—Faith, Mr. Clerimont you do not do well to behave in this faſhion. You have loſt ſome money indeed, but you have loſt it fairly. I never take an advantage of any man, and ſhall be ready to give you your revenge at any time.

Hazard. Aye, I will ſay that for the count; he ſcorns a mean thing.

Cogdy. I believe there is not a more unlucky fellow at play in the world than myſelf, though I have happened to win to-night: yet, as I ſaid before, I am ready to give Mr. Clerimont an opportunity of retrieving all he has loſt whenever he pleaſes. For my part, I would ſtake all I am worth againſt a pair of ſhoe-buckles, rather than any gentleman ſhould think I impoſed upon him.

Coaxum. No, no, you are above any ſuch thing.

Hazard.

Hazard. We all know that.

Makeplea. Come, come, gentlemen, this is doing nothing; all loſs of time, and every moment of mine is precious. There are two noblemen now waiting for me at the Garter tavern. Pray proceed to the buſineſs: let me know how the deeds I have brought with me are to be filled up.

Cogdy. I will tell you immediately; but firſt I muſt do juſtice to this gentleman.—Here, Sir, are the watch and ring you ſtaked; the value of which, you know, is added to the other ſums.

Clerimont put the one in his pocket, and the other on his finger, with a deep ſigh; and the count went on repeating to Makeplea the ſubſtance of what he was to write. The latter, at the end of every article, demanded of Clerimont whether he agreed to it; to which he ſullenly replied—'I do; I ſee no other remedy.' The lawyer having diſpatched his part, Clerimont was deſired to ſign and ſeal: he did both; but with ſuch a trembling hand, and viſible diſtraction of mind, that my heart bled for him. In delivering the writings to the count, he ſaid—

Clerimont. There, Sir—I ſuppoſe this is all that is required of me, and I may now depart?

Cogdy. No, no, we muſt have a bottle and a bird together, to ſhew we are all ſtill good friends.

Hazard. Aye, and each of us a wench, too. I know where there is a covey of as young, pretty, plump, partridges, as any in Covent Garden.

Clerimont. Rot your bottle, and your bird, and your wenches! I have done with them, and you, and the world, for ever!

In ſpeaking theſe words he ſnatched up his ſword and hat, and ran directly out of the houſe. As for me, I had as little inclination as himſelf to ſtay in the company of ſuch blood-ſuckers; but having never ſeen him before, I was curious to know ſomewhat more of him, and alſo how he would behave when alone, and at liberty to ruminate on the misfortune he had plunged himſelf into; ſo followed his ſteps with all the ſpeed I could.

It was not difficult to keep pace with him; for though he gained ground of me at firſt, he ſoon halted, and gave me an opportunity of coming up with him. Never did man traverſe the ſtreets with more diſordered motions; croſſing the way an hundred times, I believe, within the ſpace of half a quarter of a mile, without having the leaſt occaſion to do ſo. Sometimes he would run as if in purſuit of ſomebody, and ſometimes ſtand quite ſtill. And it was well the darkneſs of the night befriended him, otherwiſe whoever had met him would doubtleſs have taken him to be mad.

In this faſhion he went part of the Strand, and turned down one of thoſe ſtreets leading to the water-ſide. He ſtopped about the middle of it at a door, and had his hand upon the knocker; but a ſudden thought coming that inſtant into his head, he left it, without making the ſignal for admittance, and walked ſlowly to the end of the ſtreet; where leaning on a little wall that overlooks the river, he remained for ſome minutes in the moſt thoughtful and contemplative attitude; then ſaid to himſelf—'How profound, how ſolemn, is the 'ſilent ſcene! inviting to a certain reſt 'from miſery and ſhame! Here, with-'in the boſom of this friendly element, 'may all my follies and misfortunes be 'hid for ever from the talking world!'

I feared nothing leſs would enſue, than that I ſhould ſee him preſently attempt to do as his words had hinted; I therefore drew as near to him as I could, in order to prevent ſo bad an effect of his deſpair. Here I cannot help remarking, that if the thing had happened as I expected, and Clerimont had found himſelf ſnatched from his fate by an Inviſible hand, he would doubtleſs have imagined his preſervation owing to the interpoſition of ſome Supernatural Being, and reported it as a miracle.

But how he would have acted on ſuch an odd occaſion, is uncertain; for, after a pauſe, and diſburthening himſelf of ſome few ſighs, he ſtarted from the poſture he had been in, and cried—'No, it muſt not be; I have ſome buſi-'neſs ſtill for life—revenge on the curſt 'cheat, the villain, that has undone 'me! Love, too, demands ſomething 'from me; but by what means I ſhall 'repay that mighty debt, I know not. 'Oh, Charlotte! Charlotte! on how 'loſt a wretch haſt thou beſtowed thy 'heart!'

Theſe words were uttered with a groan which ſeemed to cleave his breaſt, and were the laſt I heard from him at that time. He turned back, and went haſtily to the houſe where he had firſt ſtopped: the door was opened on his knocking; and

and too ſuddenly ſhut again for me to have entered with him if I had intended it; but the variety of accidents preſented to me in this evening's ramble, had already ſufficiently filled my head, and made me glad to retire to my repoſe.

CHAP. IV.

RELATES SOME PASSAGES WHICH MAY PROBABLY DRAW SIGHS FROM MANY A TENDER HEART OF BOTH SEXES.

THE next morning, running over in my mind the detail of the tranſactions of the evening before, the vexation I had received on the ſcore of Betty Canning very much ſubſided, and I looked upon the whole thing as below a ſerious conſideration. I could not help, indeed, retaining ſome concern that the people of England ſhould be ſo infatuated as to ſuffer their thoughts to be led aſtray and alienated from affairs of the greateſt conſequence by ſuch an idle ſtory; but as I doubted not but that the impoſition ſhe had been guilty of would be detected, though her abettors might perhaps find means to ſcreen her perſon from the puniſhment, I became more eaſy, and reſolved to banish, as much as poſſible, all remembrance of it.

But my ideas were widely different in regard to poor Clerimont. As much a ſtranger as he was to me, I was convinced, by what I had ſeen and heard, that as he had no ſtock of ready money to prevent the mortgage he had made of his reverſion, ſo I was equally aſſured, by his deſpair, that he had no viſible means of raiſing a ſum ſufficient to redeem it. His calling on the name of Charlotte with ſo much vehemence, made me alſo not doubt but that he had ſome tender attachment, which he feared would be broke through by what he had done.

Though I know no vice for which I have a more real contempt than the love of gaming, yet the age of this gentleman, which could not exceed three and twenty, ſeemed to me a very moving plea in his behalf; and the graces of his mien and aſpect ſo much intereſted me in his favour, that I leſs blamed his inadvertency than compaſſionated the misfortune it had brought him into. In fine, his perſon and his ſufferings had made a very ſtrong impreſſion on me; he was the firſt object of my waking thoughts; and my impatience to be better acquainted with his circumſtances, obliged me to leave my bed ſome hours before the time in which I was accuſtomed to do ſo. I roſe in a hurry, tranſcribed what I have been relating, and got the dialogues expunged from my Tablets by the pure fingers of my little virgin; then haſtened to the houſe where I had ſeen Clerimont enter the night before, and which, by the help of ſome lamps in the ſtreet, I had taken ſufficient notice of to be able to know again. The door was luckily open when I came to it. A ſervant-maid, who ſeemed to have more inclination to hold a goſſip's tale than to do the buſineſs ſhe was hired for, ſtood leaning with both her hands upon her mop, very earneſt in diſcourſe with one of her own occupation in the neighbourhood. A few words ſerved to convince me that theſe wenches were deſcanting on the affairs of the families they lived in; which, as I was not at preſent in a humour to pry into, I ſtaid not to hear what was ſaid, but went directly into the houſe, and up ſtairs, ſuppoſing Clerimont might be lodged in the firſt floor. I was not deceived; I found him writing at his bureau in the dining-room. A letter lay by him directed to Count Cogdy: this was folded, and ready for ſealing, ſo it was not in my power to examine the contents; but his pen, on my entrance, was employed on another; which, looking over his ſhoulder, I ſaw was dictated in the following terms—

'My only dear, and forever dear CHARLOTTE!

'A Thouſand heart-rending ſighs, a 'thouſand pangs more terrible 'than any death can inflict, accompany 'every ſyllable of this diſtracted epiſtle! 'I foreſee the anguiſh it will give you, 'and feel all the weight of yours added to my own. Oh, Charlotte! I 'muſt ſee you no more! That love, ſo 'long cemented by the utmoſt proofs 'of mutual tenderneſs, and ſo near being fulfilled in a happy union, muſt be 'now broke off at once—diſſolved for 'ever! I have renounced all claim to 'every future good, and juſtly incurred 'the fate that now attends me. A few

'hours

'hours will inform you, that I either 'do not exist at all, or exist only to 'be a vagrant! a wretched exile from 'father, country, friends, and you, 'more dear than all! In fine, my 'Charlotte, such is the sad necessity to 'which I have reduced myself, as com- 'pels me to do a thing which nature 'most abhors; I go this morning either 'to kill or be killed: which of these two 'shall happen, is in the hand of Heaven; 'each equally tears me from every 'earthly comfort. I chose to acquaint 'you previously with this accident, to 'the end you may be the less surprized 'when you shall hear it from the mouth 'of others. I can say no more. Fare- 'wel, thou loveliest, best, and dearest 'of thy sex! Hate not the memory of 'the undone

'CLERIMONT.

'P. S. As I have rendered myself 'unworthy of preserving any marks 'of your affection, I return the 'ring with which you blessed my 'finger in our happier days. Ac- 'cept once more my last adieu! 'May endless blessings await you, 'superior, if possible, to my woes!'

This unhappy gentleman diff mbled not in the lines he wrote; his heart now laboured with agonies greater than could be expressed with words, and shewed themselves in every look and gesture. After having carefully inclosed the ring, and put both that and the letter under a cover, he ordered a chairman to be called; and delivering to him both these dispatches, and telling him where they were to be carried, he proceeded to give some farther instructions—'This, to Miss 'Charlotte, you are to leave with her 'servant, with orders to give it to her 'lady when she is stirring; this, to Count 'Cogdy, requires an immediate answer, 'which you must wait for.' The fellow, having assured him that he would be punctual in obeying his commands, went on his errand; and Clerimont continued walking backwards and forwards in the room, with a motion extremely discomposed; then threw himself down on a settee, and presently seemed buried, as it were, in a profound reverie.

I am pretty certain it was a full half hour before he exchanged this fixed and death-like position for one in a quite contrary extreme; his looks and gestures now, methought, had somewhat like frantick in them; he beat his head against the wainscot, stamped, and ever and anon burst into the most vehement exclamations; some of which are these—'How unhappy a creature is man! The 'very reason we are so proud of makes 'us miserable! The brutes, equally 'void of passions as of sorrow, neither 'feel torments here, nor dread a future 'hell! What will poor Charlotte say 'on reading of my letter! How wil 'my father support the story of my fate, 'when it shall reach his ears! Wretch, 'wretch, that I am! born to be a curse 'to all who love me!'

The return of the chairman brought him a little to his senses, and he demanded hastily whether he had got an answer from Count Cogdy; to which the man replied—

Chairman. No, Sir. I went there first, but the people of the house told me he was not stirring, nor they believed would be for a great while; so I went on to Madam Charlotte's, and left the letter with her maid, as your honour bid me: but I had not got above half the street, before her footboy ran after me, and said his lady would speak to me; on which I went back with him.

Clerimont. Charlotte already up! that's strange.—What did she say to you?

Chairman. Sir, she only asked where the gentleman was that sent the letter by me, and whether you were alone. I told her you were at home, and that there was nobody with you that I saw. She said it was very well, and I came away; went again to the count's, and waited there till his own man told me that his master had not been in bed above two hours, and he was sure would not rise till twelve or one o'clock at soonest; said I might leave the letter, and come about that time for an answer. Now as I did not know whether that would be proper, I thought it best to bring it back.

Clerimont. You did well. I shall see him myself.

On this the chairman laid down the letter on the table; and finding Clerimont had no farther commands for him, withdrew. Clerimont then fell into a second pause, but it lasted not long, and he cried out—'Yes, I will go. And 'perhaps 'tis better that he did not see 'my billet; he might have found some 'way to evade the challenge that I sent

'him; but I shall now surprize and 'force him to accept it.'

While he was speaking, he stepped to the closet, and brought out a pair of pocket pistols, with some ammunition to load them with: he was just beginning to perform that work, when the maid of the house came up, and told him a lady desired to speak with him. Clerimont turned hastily about; but before he had time to speak, his fair guest was in the room. Charlotte, (for it was she herself, but extremely disordered both in her dress and looks) on finding how Clerimont was employed, thus accosted him—

Charlotte. Oh, Clerimont! Clerimont! what means that cruel letter you just now sent me? Wherefore these dreadful preparations? Tell me, this instant tell me, or I shall die with apprehension!

Clerimont. Ah, Charlotte! never till now unwelcome to my sight, why, in this fatal moment, dost thou set before me that angelick form, which serves but to remind me more of the heaven I have lost!

Charlotte. Shock not my soul with this despair, yet cruelly conceal from me the cause! I have a right to be made the partner of your griefs as well as joys. Speak, then, I conjure you; let me know all.

Clerimont. I cannot.

Charlotte. You love me not, if you hide aught from me. The worst of evils could not give me half the pain as this uncertainty. Clear, then, the tempest on your brow; compose your mind; remove those murderous instruments from my sight, and——Ha! what's here!

In pointing towards the pistols, she saw the letter directed to Count Cogdy; which she hastily snatched up, and went on, saying—

Charlotte. A letter to that infamous villain!—Ah! then I guess what has happened; some cursed gaming quarrel! —Clerimont, I must read this letter.

Clerimont. You may: it will in part reveal what my tongue has not the power to utter.

Ever since my coming into the room, I had been extremely impatient to see the contents of this billet; so while the lady, with a trembling hand, was breaking open the seal, I slipped behind her, and read, at the same time she did, these lines—

'SIR,

'I Remember that, in the midst of my 'confusion last night, you offered 'to give me my revenge whenever I 'should demand it; which I now do, 'and expect you will meet me within 'an hour in the long field behind the 'bason in Mary-le-Bon, armed with 'sword and pistol; for it is not with 'cards or dice we now must try our 'skill. You have left me nothing but 'my life to lose, and I am impatient 'till I stake it against yours. Come 'without a second; for I know no gen'tleman whom I would demean so far 'as to engage him with any of your in'famous associates. If you refuse to 'comply with this summons, which 'does you too much honour, you may 'depend that, the first time I see you, 'in what place soever it be, I shall make 'you an example to all scoundrels, 'cheats, and cowards. So no more 'at present from

'CLERIMONT.

'P. S. Send your answer by the 'bearer.'

Charlotte. Then you would fight! would hazard a life so precious to me, only in revenge for being defrauded of a paltry sum! Pray how much have you lost?

Clerimont. My all.

Charlotte. Be more explicit.

He then related to her all the particulars of his misfortune; which, as the reader is already acquainted with, would be needless to repeat. When he had given over speaking, Charlotte, with the greatest serenity and sweetness, said to him—

Charlotte. And is this all that has disconcerted you in so terrible a manner?

Clerimont. What means my Charlotte? Am I not a beggar! irrecoverably a beggar!

Charlotte. How can that be, when you say the writings will be returned to you on payment of a thousand pounds? and am not I in possession of eight times that sum, which, with myself, you are shortly to be master of?

Clerimont. Plunder my Charlotte! No, forbid it honour, justice, love! First let me perish!

Charlotte.

Charlotte. Be not so rash. You must, you shall accept it.

Clerimont. Oh, Charlotte! could I abuse such goodness, I were a villain, meaner, viler far than he that has undone me!

Charlotte. Indeed I will not be denied: and if you persist in this obstinacy, will go myself in person, pay the money, and redeem the obligation.

Clerimont. Oh, speak not, think not, of such a thing, unless you wish to see me turn against myself one of those weapons I intended for my adversary!

Charlotte. Hold, Clerimont! Forbear to fright me thus!—Just as you spoke, a sudden thought started into my head, as if there were a way to rid you of this incumbrance without any expence either to yourself or me.

Clerimont. How! By what miracle!

Charlotte. The project is not yet quite fashioned in my brain. But you must come with me to my lodgings, for I dare not trust you with yourself. As we go, perhaps I may be able to bring my scheme to more perfection.

Clerimont. Oh, Charlotte, thy softness quite unmans me!

Charlotte. No, it is your own despair unmans you. Let me prevail on you to give only some respite to these horrible ideas.

Clerimont. Well, you must be obeyed. I will defer the execution of my intentions till another day.

Charlotte seemed transported at having won thus far upon him; and a coach being called, they both went into it. I listened to the directions given where to drive; and, eager to know what turn this affair would take, followed on foot as fast as I was able.

CHAP. V.

MAY POSSIBLY BECOME THE SUBJECT OF SOME FUTURE COMEDY, AS THERE IS NOTHING IN THE STORY THAT CAN BE OBJECTED TO AT THE LICENCE-OFFICE.

AMONG all the indefatigable enquiries I had so long been making after things intended to be kept secret, never had my curiosity met with a greater disappointment than it did at the time I am speaking of. I arrived at the house where Charlotte lodged the very moment that the coach which brought that lady and her lover thither was discharged and driving off; and had the mortification to see the door shut when I was not at the distance of above ten paces from it. Every present minute, however, flattering me with the hopes that the succeeding ones would be more successful, I waited, though I cannot say with much patience about two hours; no one having any occasion, I suppose, either to go in or out. At last a friendly baker knocked at the door; which being opened, I took the opportunity to slip in while he delivered a loaf of bread to the servant of the house.

I went up stairs, and found the persons I sought for in the dining-room. But here, alas! I was a second time disappointed; the grand consultation between them was over before my entrance, and what I heard after I came in could not make me able to form any judgement of the subject they had been upon. I could only know that something of great moment had been concluded, as the reader will easily perceive by the following short dialogue—

Charlotte. You cannot imagine how much you have obliged me by this confession; but I will not detain you, lest the villain should be gone out. Remember to fix the appointment at seven, or between seven and eight, this evening.

Clerimont. Yes, yes.

Charlotte. By that time I shall be able to get every thing in order; and you will see I shall play my part as well as the best actress of them all. Do you take care that no unguarded look or word gives the count any room to suspect you are less in good-humour than you pretend to be.

Clerimont. Fear not; I shall be cautious not to spoil so good a plot by my ill performance.

Charlotte. If it succeeds, as I have not the least doubt it will, the story will be a subject of mirth for us as lasting as our lives.

Clerimont. And as lasting a subject for my admiration of the wit and contrivance of my dear, dear Charlotte.

Charlotte. Well, well, defer your encomiums till a more seasonable opportunity. I long, methinks, to have this

buſineſs over; and it is high time for you to begin to ſet the firſt wheel of our machine in motion.

Clerimont. I am going. Adieu, my love.

He accompanied theſe words with a very tender and paſſionate ſalute, then left the room. Though I eaſily perceived that Charlotte had ſomewhat of great importance to tranſact in this affair, yet, as I could not be in two places at once, I choſe to follow Clerimont. He went directly to Cogdy's lodgings; and, on aſking if he were at home, was ſhewed into a handſome parlour; where, after waiting about a minute, the count's ſervant came to him, and ſaid his maſter had not been long out of bed, and was not quite dreſſed, but deſired he would walk up; which he did, with his Inviſible attendant cloſe behind him. The count no ſooner ſaw him enter, than he ran to embrace him with a French complaiſance, ſaying at the ſame time—

Cogdy. Dear Clerimont, I am glad to ſee you.

Clerimont. My dear count, a lucky morning to you. I behaved ſomewhat oddly laſt night, and could not be eaſy till I came and aſked your pardon.

Cogdy. Oh, Sir, you have it, you have it; I thought no more of it. I know it is natural for a gentleman to be a little out of humour at firſt loſing his money.

Clerimont. But I was leſs excuſable than you imagine; for, to confeſs the truth, I had, in Bank bills, upwards of two thouſand pounds lying in my bureau at home; ſo was under no neceſſity either of playing upon tick, or of troubling a lawyer to mortgage the reverſion of my eſtate.

Cogdy. Is it poſſible! Are you in earneſt?

Clerimont. To convince you I am ſo, you ſhall have the teſtimony of your own eyes. See here, count—and here.

In ſpeaking this, he took out of his pocket-book ſeveral bills to the amount of the ſum he had mentioned. The count ſtretched his eyes broad open; looked at the bills, ſeemed much ſurprized, and ſaid—

Cogdy. Theſe are Bank-bills, indeed!

Clerimont. Aye, I can turn them into ready ſpecie at any banker's in town.

Cogdy. Well, I cannot help wondering how a man who had two thouſand pounds by him could ſuffer himſelf to be diſconcerted at the loſs of one.

Clerimont. Hang it, it was not the loſs of the money that vexed me; but I had the hyppo, and that damned hyp makes one affront one's beſt friends.

Cogdy. So, then, I ſuppoſe you will redeem your mortgage?

Clerimont. Time enough for that. But, now I think on it, you offered me my revenge, and I'll e'en try my chance once more.

Cogdy. As how?

Clerimont. Why, ſtake one of theſe thouſands againſt my mortgage, ſo either win the horſe or loſe the ſaddle.

Cogdy. With all my heart: whenever you pleaſe.

Clerimont. Let it be to-night, then.

Cogdy. Agreed. Will you ſtay and dine with me?

Clerimont. I am engaged with a young fellow juſt come to town, and to the poſſeſſion of a great eſtate; but I will meet you at night, and perhaps bring him with me.

Cogdy. Do; I ſhall be glad of his acquaintance.

Clerimont. We knew one another in the country: he will go any where with me.—But, harkye, count, I don't like that houſe we were in laſt night; every thing in it, methinks, has the face of poverty and ill-luck. My young ſpark is vaſtly nice, and will be apt to turn up his noſe at it. Can't you think of a more agreeable place?

Cogdy. I know of ſeveral. The only reaſon that makes me chuſe to go thither ſo often is, becauſe I think it the moſt ſafe. This curſed act of parliament has laid ſuch reſtriction on us who love play, that it is not every where we dare venture to indulge ourſelves in that diverſion.

Clerimont. What objection have you to Mixum's, in ****** Street?

Cogdy. 'Tis a good houſe, and excellent accommodation. But don't you know that it was ſearched three or four nights ago by a whole poſſe of conſtables?

Clerimont. Yes, but they found nothing of what they came to look for; therefore the moſt ſecure at preſent, as they will ſcarce come again in haſte.

Cogdy. Well, then, we will meet there, if you pleaſe. At what hour?

Clerimont. Seven, or a little after, if it ſuits you.

Cogdy.

Cogdy. Extremely well; then we shall have the whole evening before us.

He was about to take his leave, and had rose up for that purpose, when Wheedle, Hazard, and Coaxum, came all together into the room; they seemed a little surprized at seeing him there, but saluted him with their usual familiarity.

Hazard. Hah! dear Clerimont, good morning to you.

Wheedle. Now you look like yourself again; you were quite another man last night.

Coaxum. Aye, faith, you must expect to be well roasted.

Clerimont. I know I deserve it. But you must defer your farcaims till night, for I am in great haste at present; so, gentlemen, your servant.

He was going out of the room with these words; but, just as he came to the door, he turned back, and said to Count Cogdy—

Clerimont. Be sure, count, not to forget to bring the writings with you.

Cogdy. No, no; they have never been out of my pocket since you delivered them to me last night.

There passed no more between them: Clerimont went hastily down stairs, and I gladly would have followed him; but Hazard and Wheedle happened to stand between the door and the corner where I had unluckily posted myself, so that it was impossible for me to remove my quarters without running a very great risque of being seen either by the one or the other. During the short time I was compelled to stay, I heard the following conversation, which I would not trouble my readers with the repetition of, but to shew what monsters of mankind these degenerate wretches are who get their livelihood by gaming.

Coaxum. What does he mean by writing?—Sure he is not going to redeem his mortgage!

Cogdy. No; but he is going to send a thousand, or, it is likely, two thousand pounds after it. We have made an appointment to play again to night.

Hazard. What, upon tick?

Wheedle. Phoo! that is doing of nothing; the fool has no more estates in reversion to make over.

Cogdy. You cannot imagine me so weak as to lose my time with a fellow that has no money nor effects; no, no, I always go upon good grounds. I tell you he has two thousand pounds in Bank-bills; he shewed them to me.

Hazard. How did he come by them?

Cogdy. 'Tis no matter to us how he came by them; we are sure of making them ours before we sleep.

Wheedle. They must certainly be bills his father has intrusted him with to buy stock either for himself or some of his friends in the country. The young fellow will hang himself to-morrow, when he reflects on what he has done.

Hazard. Let him hang himself, when we have got all he has to lose.

Cogdy. Aye, aye. But I can tell you better news than this: he brings a rich young heir with him; one that knows nothing of the world; a mere sap, a greenhorn. There will be fleecing, my boys!

Just as the count had done speaking, some little noise in the street made them all run to the windows; by which means I got the so much wished-for opportunity of escaping from my confinement. When I found myself at liberty, I began to consider not only on what I had seen and heard, but also on what I had not seen nor heard. I was still as much in the dark as ever as to Charlotte's contrivance, and could not keep myself from fretting at the many disappointments I had met with on that account; I was doomed, however, to receive yet one more.

Though I doubted not but when the gamesters met the whole would be laid open to me, yet the time seemed too tedious for my impatience. I wanted to know the business of the plot before I saw it acted, and set myself to think on the most probable means to accomplish my designs. Accordingly I went to the lodgings of Charlotte, hoping to find Clerimont there, and discover something further by the discourse they would have together; but, to my great mortification, perceived the rooms quite empty, excepting a little lap dog lying on a cushion before the fire. I had now no other resource than to go home to dinner, which I did; and after having got my Tablets made ready to receive a new impression, diverted myself in the best manner I could till the hour arrived which enabled me to explore what at present appeared so mysterious to me.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

WILL PUT A FINAL PERIOD TO THE SUSPENCE OF MY READERS, IN RELATION TO CLERIMONT AND CHARLOTTE.

AS precious a thing as time is, and as much as I always knew the real value of it, the hours, methought, moved ſlowly on till the clock ſtruck ſeven, and told me that I might now hope for the full eclairciſſement of an adventure I had already taken ſo much fruitleſs pains to explore. Pretty ſecure, however, that I ſhould not loſe my labour any more on this occaſion, I went with great glee and jollity of mind to the houſe of Mr. Mixum. Count Cogdy and his three aſſociates came preſently after, and were ſhewn into the beſt room, where I accompanied them. On their calling for wine, Mixum came up with it himſelf, to pay his compliments, as not having ſeen them for a conſiderable time; and there enſued ſome diſcourſe concerning the ſearch-warrant that had been granted againſt the houſe, the manner in which thoſe perſons who were there had made their eſcape from the officers, and ſuch like affairs; which not being at all material to my purpoſe, I regarded not, nor ſpread my Tablets to receive.

Within about half an hour Clerimont and his young friend appeared. The firſt ſight of the latter extremely ſtruck me; I thought I had ſomewhere ſeen that face, but when, or where, or on what occaſion, I could not preſently recollect, and it was ſome minutes before I knew this ſeeming beau for a real belle; in fine, it was no other than Charlotte herſelf. She was, indeed, ſo artfully diſguiſed in all points, that a perſon much better acquainted with her features might have been deceived; her cheeks, which had naturally no more red in them than was neceſſary to preſerve her complexion from the character of a dead paleneſs, were now, by the help of carmine or Portugal paſte, of a high ruddy colour; her eye-brows, which were of a fine light brown, were now black as jet; and that ſweet and modeſt air ſo becoming in the amiable Charlotte, converted into one all bold and rakiſh.

Clerimont, with a well-diſſembled gaiety in his voice and countenance, preſented her to the company, telling them he had taken the liberty to introduce a friend, whoſe converſation he doubted not would be agreeable to them. They received her with the greateſt politeneſs and good-breeding: for I muſt here obſerve, that though theſe men, either through the calamities of the times, or their own miſmanagement and ill-conduct, were reduced to the wretched courſe they now took for ſubſiſtence, they had all of them been endowed with a liberal education, and knew how to behave like perſons of real honour and faſhion whenever they found it ſuitable to their intereſt to do ſo. The glaſs went round two or three times, while they talked only on ordinary matters; but our fair Amazon being impatient, I ſuppoſe, to put the finiſhing ſtroke to the ſtratagem ſhe had formed, ſtarted up on a ſudden, and ſaid—

Charlotte. Well, but, gentlemen, how are we to paſs the evening? I hope in ſomething more agreeable than mere chit-chat? Clerimont talked of play, and I ſee you have implements ready.

Cogdy. Sir, we amuſe ourſelves that way ſometimes; and, if you chuſe it, ſhall be ready to oblige you.

Charlotte. Oh, by all means. I love play extravagantly: the muſick of a dice-box is to me beyond all Handel's operas and oratorios; here is more real harmony than in the ſpheres themſelves, and I could dance eternally to the ſound. Come, gentlemen, which of you will engage me? I have ſome looſe pieces in my pocket, which I am ready to throw away, if chance ſhould ſo determine.

Hazard. Then, Sir, I am your man, if you think fit; for I know the count has made an agreement to play with Clerimont on a very particular occaſion.

Charlotte. Then, Sir, I will content myſelf a while with being a by-ſtander.

Hazard. You need not, Sir; you ſee here are more tables than one.

Charlotte. Aye; but I chuſe to bet on my friend's ſide.

Hazard. Play, as you pleaſe for that: we ſhall any of us be ready to take you up.

The count and Clerimont being now in an attitude to play, and the writings laid down on the one ſide, and a thouſand pound

pound Bank-bill on the other, Charlotte cried out—

Charlotte. What! paper againſt parchment! Theſe are the oddeſt ſtakes I ever ſaw. Yours, Clerimont, I think, is a thouſand pounds?

Cogdy. I aſſure you, Sir, that mine is the full equivalent.

Charlotte. I believe ſo. But, before you begin, you muſt give me leave to ſpeak a word or two.

Cogdy. As many as you pleaſe, Sir.

Charlotte. It is only this—You muſt loſe, count.

Cogdy. Muſt loſe, Sir!

Charlotte. Aye, Sir, muſt loſe.

Cogdy. That, Sir, will happen, as Fortune ſhall decree.

Charlotte. Sir, I ſtand in the place of Fortune, and tell you that you muſt loſe thoſe writings to Clerimont.

Hazard. What means all this!

Cogdy. I do not underſtand you, Sir.

Charlotte. I will ſpeak plainer. Your falſe dice will be of no ſervice to you at this time. You muſt willingly return to Clerimont that deed of reverſion which you drew him in to ſign as a ſecurity for money you had baſely cheated him of: I ſay willingly; for, if you do not, I am come prepared with means to force you to it.

Cogdy. Sir, I ſcorn both your words and threats. I never cheated any man; nor will part with what chance has beſtowed upon me.

Hazard. 'Sdeath! ſhall we be bullied by ſuch a prig!

Charlotte. None of your big words; I have that will ſilence you. See here, the copy of a warrant from Juſtice Ferrit, to apprehend and bring before him the bodies of George Van Hellmock, alias Count Cogdy, John Hazard, Thomas Wheedle, and William Coaxum. The original of this is in the hands of perſons who, on the leaſt ſtamp of my foot, will come up and put it in execution.

The gameſters now looked on each other with all the marks of conſternation; but, before they had time to make any reply to what Charlotte had ſaid, Mixum, all pale and trembling, came running into the room, and ſaid—

Mixum. Oh, gentlemen, we are all undone! Three or four conſtables are at the door; one of my drawers ſaw them as he went out to carry a pint of wine to a neighbour's houſe: and there is a young man below, too, who I dare ſay is a ſpy; for he does not ſtay in the room, but walks backwards and forwards in the entry, and looks at every body as they paſs by; ſo that there is no eſcaping, either one way or the other.

Charlotte. He tells you truth; the perſon he ſpeaks of is planted there by me, and, on my giving the ſignal, will call in his myrmidons; ſo that you have nothing for it but to deliver the writings quietly to Clerimont: if you do this, I will inſtantly go down, and ſend away the officers, under pretence that the information was wrong, and that no gameſters are here.

Cogdy. Confuſion! What is to be done!

Hazard. 'Sdeath, count, do not part with the writings! We'll fight our way through them!

Charlotte. Nay, then, I give the ſignal.

She advanced towards the door with theſe words; but Mixum threw himſelf between, and, with the moſt pity-moving geſture, ſaid—

Mixum. Hold, Sir, I beſeech you! Conſider, I never offended you! Do not ruin me and my houſe for ever!

Clerimont. Oh, you will be provided with lodgings in Bridewell, and fare no worſe than theſe worthy gentlemen here, your cuſtomers.

Cogdy. Well, I did not think Mr. Clerimont would have turned informer.

Clerimont. Nor did I think I had aſſociated myſelf with common ſharpers, cheats, and villains, till laſt night convinced me of it.

Charlotte. Theſe altercations are only loſs of time; the officers will be impatient. Speak, count, reſolve at once; ſhall I diſmiſs, or call them to the exerciſe of their function?

Cogdy. Hell and the devil!—What ſay you, gentlemen?

Wheedle. E'en give up the writings, and the devil go with them!

Coaxum. Aye, aye, give them up.

Hazard. Since there is no remedy, I give my vote.

Cogdy. Nothing vexes me ſo much as to be thus outwitted, gulled, tricked.—There, Mr. Clerimont, take back your mortgage. But I muſt tell you, Sir, that you have not acted like a gentleman.

Clerimont. I threw off the gentleman when I condeſcended to play in ſuch

such company. A gamester is the lowest and most infamous of all characters; nay, the most dangerous, too; worse even than a highway robber: he takes but part; you plunder, without remorse, the whole fortune of him whom you decoy into your snares. Nor can there be any excuse from your necessities, while we have so numerous a fleet and standing army, which are continually wanting recruits, and refuse none who have health and vigour.

Cogdy. Sir, you have got what you wanted; so pray keep your remonstrances to yourself.

Charlotte. Aye, aye, advice is lost on such hardened profligates. Come, let us go.

Clerimont. I attend you.

Neither Clerimont nor his fair champion said any more, but went directly out of the room: a volley of curses from the mouths of all these miscreants pursued their steps. I had no inclination to stay where I was; but, just as I passed the door, I heard Jack Hazard, who was the most violent of the four, say to his companions—'It is that saucy, pert, 'young coxcomb, that has spirited up 'Clerimont to do all this: but if ever I 'meet him in a convenient place, I'll 'pink him—I'll make a loop-hole in his 'flesh big enough to let out twenty such 'puny souls.'

I could not forbear laughing within myself at this menace; which, though it shewed the villainous disposition of the wretch who spoke it, I knew it was impossible ever to reach the person it was levelled against. The amiable and witty Charlotte kept her promise; and, on her coming down stairs, gave orders to the young man who waited her commands to send away the constables; after which she took coach with her lover, attended with as many blessings and good-wishes from Mixum, as she had been loaded with curses from those above.

As I could expect no more from this adventure than the retributions of Clerimont to his beloved Charlotte, for the happy deliverance she had given him from destruction, and which I could easily conceive without hearing, I returned to my own apartment, in order to get my Tablets made ready for the acquisition of some new discovery. I must not, however, take leave of these lovers, without letting the publick know that a marriage between them, which had some time before been agreed upon, is now consummated; and that Clerimont, sincerely touched with the danger he has escaped, has made a firm resolution never to play but for small sums, and for those only with persons whose honour and integrity he is well assured of. As for the gamesters, they still continue to infest this great town, like Satan, watching to devour all the prey they can get into their clutches. If this little narrative may warn any person to avoid the snare, the pains I have taken to explain it will be well rewarded.

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINS SOMETHING WHICH PERHAPS THERE ARE MORE LADIES THAN ONE WILL NOT THINK THEMSELVES OBLIGED TO THE AUTHOR FOR REVEALING.

THERE is no resentment so implacable and lasting as that which is occasioned by love converted into hatred by ill treatment; and by the more slow degree this passion rises in our minds, the more virulent it becomes after having once gained possession.

Cleanthes, a gentleman of good family, great worth, and opulent estate, loved to the most romantick excess a young woman who, excepting a tolerable share of beauty, had no one real charm to recommend her to a person of his character. She was meanly born, more meanly educated; she was silly, vain, capricious, and of a reputation not quite unblemished. Yet did he no sooner become acquainted with her, than he broke off the addresses he had long made to a lady of great merit and fortune; and, in a short time, contrary to all the remonstrances and dissuasions of his friends, publickly married her.

Being a husband made him not less a lover. His obsequiousness is not to be paralleled; his whole study was to please her; every succeeding day brought with it an addition of his dotage of her; he was always happy in her presence, never easy in her absence; and, to use Shakespeare's expression—

'Appetite increas'd by what it fed on.'

Auglara, for so she is called, had so little sense of the happiness she enjoyed,

joyed, or affection or gratitude for the man who beſtowed it on her, that ſhe preſently gave the greateſt looſe to her too amorous inclinations; thought of nothing but engaging new admirers; and, to that end, made advances, which it would be ſhocking to repeat, to every pretty fellow ſhe came in company with, even before the face of her much-injured huſband; who, blinded by his paſſion, for a long time looked on all that ſhe did as proceeding only from the too great vivacity of her temper. Had ſhe obſerved the leaſt degree of circumſpection in her amours, he would ſcarce ever have believed there was a poſſibility of her being guilty; but ſhe took no pains to deceive him; and though ſhe knew he lived but in her ſight, was ſcarce ever at home; and, through the want either of artifice or complaiſance, gave herſelf not the pains of making any excuſes for her continual rambles.

This made him at laſt fall into a deep melancholy; yet ſtill he loved her, and could not for a great while prevail on himſelf to lay any reſtrictions on her conduct. All who had any knowledge of the manner in which they lived together, while they highly condemned her treatment of him, were ready to deſpiſe his lenity and forbearance. At length, however, the tables were entirely turned; from having been at firſt the moſt fond, and afterwards the paſſive huſband, he became, all at once, the moſt cruel and tyrannick: he took from her all the jewels and other ornaments he had beſtowed upon her; locked her into a garret; ſuffered no one to come near her, except a ſervant, who carried food to her of the coarſeſt kind, and no more than would juſt ſuffice to keep her from periſhing.

It cannot be ſuppoſed but that ſo ſtrange an alteration in the behaviour of the late fond, and indeed madly doating Cleanthes, muſt become the ſubject of much converſation in town. A lady of my acquaintance, who is reckoned to have ſome taſte for poetry, ſhewed me a few lines ſhe had wrote on the occaſion, which I think may not be diſagreeable to my readers. They are as follow—

'ON THE PRESENT CRUELTY OF CLEANTHES, TO A WIFE WHOM HE ONCE LOVED TO AS GREAT AN EXCESS.

'AS tapers languiſh at th' approach of day,
'And, by degrees, melt ſlow their ſhine away,
'Awhile they glimmer with contracted fires,
'Trembling, unable to relax their ſpires;
'But, when the ſun's broad eye is open'd wide,
'And beams, thick flaſhing, ſhoot on every ſide,
'No more their emulative force they try,
'But, ſtruck with radiance, ſink at once, and die:
'So in his heart love long maintain'd it's place,
'Till full conviction glar'd him in the face,
'And forc'd th' unwilling ſoftneſs to give way
'To hate, and rage, and fierce reſentment's ſway.
'Unhappy man!
'What wild extremes hurry thy head-ſtrong will!
'What boiſt'rous paſſions thy vex'd boſom fill!
'To reaſon's ſacred rules a truant ſtill.
'Whoe'er he be the golden mean foregoes,
'Exchanges hop'd-for joys for certain woes.'

By all the diſcourſes I heard wherever I went concerning this affair, I found, that though ſcarce any one pitied Aglaura, yet almoſt every one condemned Cleanthes; no leſs for his preſent illuſage of her, than they had formerly done for the extravagance of his love.

'It is beneath the dignity of a man 'of ſenſe or honour,' ſaid one, 'to treat 'thus inhumanly a woman, how un-'worthy ſoever ſhe may be, who is yet 'his wife.'

'If ſhe is really guilty of having 'wronged his bed,' cried another, 'as 'indeed there is not the leaſt room to 'doubt, why, on the diſcovery of her 'crime, did he not turn her out of doors? 'Why did he not ſue for a divorce?'

It is certain that his way of proceeding with her appeared ſo odd, that many people were apt to think that her preſent ſufferings were owing rather to a change in his own humour, than to any detection he had made of her falſhood:

others, on the contrary, imagined he ſtill loved her; and that, after he had puniſhed her a while, he would forgive all that was paſt, and again take her to his boſom. Various and widely different conjectures were formed in relation both to the huſband and the wife; at all which I laughed in my ſleeve, believing, I dare ſay with a good deal of reaſon, that no one perſon in the whole world, except the Inviſible Spy, was at the bottom of this ſecret. The means by which I became maſter of it I ſhall now acquaint my readers with.

I ſupped one night at the houſe of an intimate friend at K-nſigton; and happening to ſtay there more late than it was judged ſafe for me to go home alone, was very much preſſed by him to take a ſervant with me; but knowing I had a better ſecurity about me than any ſervant could be, rejected his offer; and when I was got a little way from the houſe, girded on my Belt of Inviſibility, and walked on at my leiſure, equally free from danger as from fear.

Many minutes had not elapſed in this employment, before I was diſturbed from it by the murmurs of ſome human voices which I heard at a ſmall diſtance. My natural curioſity making me draw nearer to the place whence the ſound proceeded, I eaſily diſtinguiſhed a man of good appearance holding by the arm a genteel well dreſſed woman, whom he ſeemed rather to drag than lead. As theſe perſons were no other than Cleanthes and Aglaura, I ſhall inſert what was ſaid by each of them under their reſpective names.

Cleanthes. Shameleſs wretch!—Can you call it an innocent frolick to come to the door of a publick coffee-houſe, and ſend in for your gallant? Had I not happened to be there, had not theſe eyes and ears been witneſſes of your guilt, you might, and doubtleſs would, have denied, forſworn it.

Aglaura. I meant no harm: I only wanted to rally him a little about ſomething I had heard concerning him.

Cleanthes. Infamous, abandoned proſtitute! Have I not an hundred times inſiſted on your never ſpeaking to that fellow more, nor to that other coxcomb, Le Brune? yet, had you not the front to run arm in arm this morning with the one into the vineyard, in the face of the whole Mall, and at night came in purſuit of the other?—But this is no time for expoſtulation; I am now convinced of the injury you have done me.

I kept pretty near to them, till they went into a coach, and drove away; and I went home ſo much aſtoniſhed at what I had heard, that I had not power to make any reflections on it for ſome time.

My mind, however, grew more ſettled by a night's repoſe; and, impatient to know how they would behave to each other after what had paſſed, I went directly to their houſe. Cleanthes was up, alone, and at breakfaſt. Soon after my entrance, a ſervant-maid came in, and ſaid to him—

Maid. Sir, my lady has called for a diſh of chocolate, but I would not preſume to carry any up without your permiſſion, as your orders laſt night were ſo poſitive that ſhe ſhould be fed with nothing but water-gruel and dry bread.

Cleanthes. Why, then, do you trouble me now? Do you think I gave orders at night to retract them in the morning? Be gone, and let me hear no more of it.

The maid withdrew, and I followed her to the room where Aglaura was now lodged, which was indeed a wretched garret. She was in bed, weeping; but, on the maid's repeating the commands of Cleanthes, her tears flowed faſter: ſhe wrung her hands, ſhe beat her breaſt. But it is more eaſy for the reader to conceive her deſpair, than for me to expreſs it; ſo I ſhall only ſay the ſpectacle was too moving, I could not bear it, but left the houſe immediately, and returned not thither till eight or ten days; in which time the town was apprized of the ſuffering of Aglaura, and ſpoke of the ſtrange change of Cleanthes in the manner I have already related.

On my next viſit. Cleanthes had with him an elderly lady, who I afterwards underſtood was his aunt. She came, it ſeems, to perſuade him to treat his tranſgreſſing wife with leſs ſeverity. The diſcourſe between them was as follows—

Lady. I am as ſenſible as you can be of the faults of Aglaura, and the diſhonour ſhe has brought upon you; yet, my dear nephew, you demean yourſelf by uſing in this faſhion a woman who, though unworthy, is ſtill your wife.

Cleanthes. Madam, I can no longer think

think of her as a wife, nor even as a woman; but as a dog that had bit me, or a ſerpent that had ſtung me.

Lady. Put her, then, out of your houſe.

Cleanthes. That would be giving her an opportunity of diſgracing me more by her proſtitutions. No, ſince I have not proofs for a divorce, I will confine her here till I can ſend her for ever from my ſight. I have already wrote to a tenant of mine in Yorkſhire; he will be in town next week, and take her with him to his houſe.

The good lady took her leave, after having heard and approved this reſolution; which, as I have been ſince informed, he put in execution as he had ſaid.

THE CONCLUSION.

HERE, O reader! a total ſtop is put to my endeavours to oblige thee. Nature has baffled all my vain precautions to preſerve my little virgin in her native purity. The woman whom I appointed to attend her accidentally dropped from her pocket the picture of a very lovely youth; the girl, unfortunately for me, as well as for thee, took it up, and was charmed with it: ſleep renewed the pleaſing image in her mind, and added life and motion to it; ſhe dreamed that it was her bedfellow; that it kiſſed, embraced, and lay within her arms; ſo that, in ſpite of all my cares, and without ever having ſeen the ſubſtance of a man, ſhe has received an idea of the difference of ſexes.

Her pretty fingers no longer have the power to cleanſe my Tablets; the dialogue laſt repeated remains ſtill unexpunged, and leaves no room for any future impreſſion. How grievous a diſappointment to me! how terrible a mortification!—But we muſt all ſubmit to deſtiny, which compels me now to bid thee eternally adieu! adieu! adieu!

FINIS.

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